

J. S. Morrison,

HEART SONGS.

HEART SONGS

BY
JEAN BLEWETT.



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Wooing His Valentine

IF I could speak in phrases fine,
Full sweet the words that I would say
To woo you for my valentine
Upon this February day.

But when I strive to tell you all,
The charms I see in your dear face,
A dumbness on me seems to fall—
O, sweetheart, let me crave your grace !

I fain would say your eyes of blue,
Like violets to me appear ;
Shy blossoms, filled with heaven's dew,
That throw their sweetness far and near.

How tender are your lips of red !
How like a rose each velvet cheek !
How bright the gold upon your head—
All this I'd say, if I could speak.

How warm your blushes come and go !
How maidenly your air and mien !
How pure the glances you bestow—
Wilt be my Valentine, O Queen ?

WOOING HIS VALENTINE

The angels walking at your side,
Methinks have lent their charms to you,
For in the world so big and wide,
There is not one so good and true.

If I had but the gift of speech,
Your beauty and your grace to prove,
Then might I find a way to reach
Your heart, and all its wealth of love.

Then, sweetheart, take the good intent—
Truth has no need of phrases fine—
Repay what long ago I lent,
And be to-day my Valentine.



Jealous, Sweetheart?

A STEP on the walk she's waiting to hear—
Waiting—waiting—
There's a frown on her face—pouting 'tis clear,
Ah, someone is late in coming I fear.
All lovers are very fickle, my dear,
Waiting, waiting!

Only last week he was praising up Nell—
Praising—praising—
Saying her voice was clear as a bell,
Thinking her fairer, and who is to tell
All that he said as they walked through the dell?
Praising, praising!

Perhaps he is with her this summer night—
Who knows? Who knows?
Perhaps he is holding her hand so white,
Perhaps he is watching her eyes so bright,
Perhaps he is wooing with all his might,
Who knows? Who knows?

Perhaps he is saying, "I love you best!"

Who cares? Who cares?

No need to carry a weight on one's breast,

No need to worry and lose one's rest,

Life is a comedy, love is a jest,

Who cares? Who cares?

What if he has quite forgotten to keep

Old ways—old ways—

There's a path where the silver moonbeams creep,

And the tangled flowers have fallen asleep,

And the dew is heavy—the clover deep—

Old ways—old ways!

He's not coming to-night, no need to wait,

Ah me! Ah me!

Hark, the clock is chiming the hour of eight,

And once on a time he railed at the fate

That kept him, if only a half-hour late—

Ah me! Ah me!

But who comes here with a swinging stride?

Ho! Ho! Ho! Ho!

Turns she away in her pique and pride,

Turns she away, till he says at her side,

"There's but one for me in the world so wide!"

Ho! Ho! Ho! Ho!

Now in the blossoms the beaded dew slips,

JEALOUS, SWEETHEART ?

Sweetheart ! Sweetheart !

Someone is kissing two tremulous lips,
And there lingers no sign of the past eclipse,
Down in the clover a drowsy bee sips,

Sweetheart ! Sweetheart !



The Day Neil Rode to Mill

MACLEOD of Dare called his son to him,
MacLeod of Dare looked morose and grim,
For he was sending on mission grave
This son of his, both handsome and brave,
And trembled, thinking, " what if he make
In his heedless youth a grave mistake ? "
'Twas not for country, nor for the King,
Nay, 'twas a much more important thing
Than the Church, or State, than feud or strife—
The mission was to search out a wife.

And young Neil listened with scanty grace,
A look of impatience on his face,
While the old man told him where to go,
Told him what to say, and what to do,
" On the morrow ye'll gang an' stay
Wi' yer rich auld uncle, Allan Gray ;
He 'ill gie ye the welcome o' a son,
Ye'll marry the dochter, there's but one,
She's worth the winnin', for in her hand

She hauds the deed o' all o' his land,
She's no weel-favored, a homely maid,
But guid, an' properly grave an' staid."

"But why should I wed a woman plain?
You didn't yourself—" MacLeod was vain,
He smiled well-pleased, and said, "True, Neil, true,
But I was handsomer far nor you!
Just coort the maiden, an' never mind
A squint or freckle, since luve is blind,
Or ought to be in a case like this,
For 'tis na' a chance I'd hae ye miss.

"She's na' sae braw as her cousin Kate,
But 'tis wi' Janet I'd hae ye mate,
For Kate, puir lassie, she has nae land,
Her face is her fortune, understand,
She live's wi' Janet, who loves her much,
And fond o' pictures, an' books, an' such;
Gie her gude-day when you chance to meet,
But mind an' yer cousin Janet greet
Wi' warmer words, and a gallant air,
Go win' ye a wife—*an' a warld o' care!*"

Neil listened closest to what was said
Of Kate, the penniless, pretty maid,
And when at length he came to the place
'Twas Kate that in his eyes found grace,

While Janet viewed him with conscious pride,
As one who would some day be his bride.
He stopped with them for many a day,
A favorite he of old Allan Gray ;
They walked together over the hill,
And through the valley, solemn and still,
The old man showed him acres wide
That would go with Janet as a bride,
Then spoke of the cousin, poor but *fair*,
The blue of her eyes, her golden hair,
“She’ll hae no flocks, an’ she’ll hae no land,
She’ll hae no plenishin’ rich an’ grand,
But gin’ she stood in her—scanty dress,
What man o’ mettle would luv her less ? ”

The youth’s heart warmed to the logic old—
O, what worth was land, what worth was gold,
What worth anything under the skies
Save the lovelight in a lassie’s eyes ?
Janet pestered him day after day,
Did he walk out, why, she went that way,
Did he come in to rest him awhile,
She was waiting with beaming smile ;
He never could get a step nearer Kate,
Janet was there like the hand of fate.
She was so cross-eyed, that none could say

Whether or not she looked his way.
But one day it chanced that, going to mill,
He overtook Kate under the hill.
Would she mount behind, and ride along ?
Perhaps she would, there was nothing wrong—
So he helped her up with trembling arm,
O, surely the day is close and warm !
Whoa mare ! go steady ! no need for haste
When two soft arms are about his waist ;
Neil, shame on him, pressed her finger-tips,
Then turned he about and pressed her lips !

On the road the hawthorn blossom white
Scattered itself just in sheer delight,
A bird was singing a tender rhyme
Of meadow, mate, and the nesting-time,
The hill looked beautiful in the glow
That heaven flung on the world below.
Ah me ! if that ride could last a week,
Her gold hair blowing against his cheek,
As they rode to mill, say the world-wise,
Nay, rode in the lane of paradise.
Travel that way, though your hair grow white,
You never forget the journey quite !

Next day, Neil went to the old home place
And met his stern father face to face ;

Boldly enough he unfolded the tale,
Though maybe his cheek was sometimes pale,
He would marry Kate, and her alone,
He had tried to care for the other one,
But she squinted so, her hair was red,
And freckles over her face were spread ;
In all the world there was none for him
But his Kate. Then laughed that old man grim,
“Your mither, lad, was a stubborn jade,
A stubborn an’ handsome dark-eyed maid,
An’ in a’ our battles she’s always won,
An’ Neil, you are just your mither’s son ;
But I haven’a lived through a’ my days
And just learnt nothing, heaven be praised !
Hark now, a gaed to your uncle’s hame
An’ bargained wi’ him afore ye came,
A’ saw yer Kate an’ like’t her weel,
A luik o’ your mither I could spell
In her bonny face, a woman to win
By ony means, that is short o’ sin,
Sae I tellit him to let Kate be
The lassie puir an’ o’ low degree,
An’ sort gie ye to understand
That Janet was owner o’ the land.
Why need I gie mesel’ sic a task ?
Ye stiff-neck fellow, ye needna ask,

THE DAY NEIL RODE TO MILL

Gin ye was coaxed, ye wouldna move—
Ye'd be too stubborn tae fa' in love ;
Like a' the Campbells ye'll hae yer way,
Yer mither's hae'd hers mony a day.

'Tis glad ye should be this day—my word !
Tak' time right now to thank the Lord,
Yer father's wisdom gat ye a bride
An' plenty o' worldly gear beside."

Ah, thankful enough was Neil that day,
The joy leaped up in his eyes of gray,
But not for his father's wisdom great,
Though maybe it had gotten him Kate,—
Not for the land, and not for the gold,—
Not for the flocks that slept in the fold,
“ Thank heaven,” he said, with a glow and thrill,
“ Thank heaven for the day I rode to mill.”



At Joppa

PERCHANCE the day was fair as this—
The eastern world is full of glow,
With warmer sun, and bluer sky,
And richer bloom than we can show—
At Joppa quaint, beside the sea,
When Simon Peter went to pray.

I wonder if he did not pause
Awhile to gaze on God's great book,
To read on earth, and sea, and sky,
The smile divine, the tender look ;
For when the hour of vision's given,
The two worlds touch—our earth and heaven.

God teaches with a tenderness
That we who follow him should learn,
Hides not His glory when 'twill bless
Eyes that look up, and souls that yearn.
He sent the vision fair to see,
And spoke to Peter on that day.

Sleeping, the voice fell on his ears,
I hear bold Peter say "Divine,
'Twill live and sound forever-more
In this poor wayward heart of mine—
'What God has cleansed,' so broad, so free,
My narrow creed flees shamed away."

Who would not be with Peter now?
Blue heaven above, and earth below,
So near to God, so far away
From sin, and wretchedness, and woe.
Before his eyes—gone, every doubt—
The glory of the skies spread out.

But hark! men knock upon the door,
And voices call, and not in vain,
For Peter comes down to the earth,
And takes his life-work up again,
Down from the fullness to the need,
From God to man, a change indeed.

We fain would on the housetop be,
We fain would hold communion sweet,
But looking up, we never heed
The work unfinished at our feet.
God, give to us, we humbly ask,
Strength for the vision and the task.

The World is Growing Old

I AM so weary, Master dear,
So very weary of the road
That I have travelled, year by year,
Bearing along life's heavy load,
It is so long, it is so steep,
This highway leading to the skies,
And shadows now begin to creep,
And sleep lies heavy on my eyes.

I am so weary, Master dear,
So very weary of the road,
I pray I may be very near
That snow-white City built of God,
Where pain and heart-ache have not strayed,
Where nought is known but peace and rest,
Where thy dear hands have ready made
A place for e'en the humblest guest.

But come thou closer, Master dear,
My weakness makes me sore dismayed,
O, let me whisper in thine ear,
For I am troubled and afraid.
What if my soul its way should miss
Between this and the world above,

And never share the perfect bliss
Provided by thy tender love ?

But lo, He speaketh at my side
So close I feel His shelt'ring touch,
*"Thou art my guest, can harm betide
One called of me, and known as such ?
Dear child, the journey is not long,
Thy heart need not to fear or shrink
An opening door, an angel's song—
Oh, heaven is nearer than you think !*



At Dawn

I CANNOT echo the old wish to die at morn,
as darkness strays !

We have been glad together greeting some
new-born and radiant days,

The earth would hold me, every day familiar
things

Would weight me fast,

The stir, the touch of morn, the bird that on
swift wings

Goes flitting past.

Some flower would lift to me its tender tear-
wet face, and send its breath

To whisper of the earth, its beauty and its
grace,

And combat death.

It would be light, and I would see in thy dear
eyes

The sorrow grow.

Love, could I lift my own undimmed to
paradise

And leave thee so !

A thousand chords would hold me down to
this low sphere,

AT DAWN

When thou didst grieve;
Ah! should death come upon morn's rosy
 breast, I fear
 I'd crave reprieve.
But when her gold all spent, the sad day takes
 her flight,
 When shadows creep,
Then just to put my hand in thine and say,
 " Good night,"
 And fall asleep.



She

A WOMAN who knows how to droop
Her eyes before the world's bold gaze,
And teach, by silence, just how near
That world dare venture to her ways.
A woman who knows how to lift
Her eyes to mine without dismay—
For innocence is might—
And say that wrong is wrong alway,
That right and truth are best alway,
Eyes heaven-lit and clear, to-night
I'll take, if for my own I may,
The creed you hold—the right !

The Two Marys

THEY journey sadly, slowly on,
The day has scarce begun,
Above the hills the rose of dawn
Is heralding the sun,
While down in still Gethsemane
The shadows have not moved,
They go, by loss oppressed, to see
The grave of One they loved.

The eyes of Mary Magdalene,
With heavy grief are filled ;
The tender eyes that oft have seen
The strife of passion stilled.
And nevermore that tender voice
Will whisper " God forgives ;"
How can the earth at dawn rejoice
Since He no longer lives ?

O, hours that were so full and sweet !
So free from doubts and fears !
When kneeling lowly at His feet
She washed them with her tears !
With head low bowed upon her breast
The other Mary goes,
“ He sleeps,” she says, “ and takes His rest
Untroubled by our woes.”

And spices rare their hands do hold
For Him, the loved and lost,
And Magdalene, by love made bold,
Doth maybe bring the most.
It is not needed, see the stone
No longer keeps its place,
And on it sits a radiant one
A light upon his face.

“He is not here, come near and look
With thine own doubting eyes,
Where once He lay—the earth is shook
And Jesus did arise.”
And now they turn to go away,
Slow stepping, hand in hand,
'Twas something wondrous he did say,
If they could understand.

The sun is flooding vale and hill,
Blue shines the sky above,
“ All Hail ! ” O voice that wakes a thrill
Familiar, full of love.
From darkest night to brightest day,
From deep despair to bliss,
They to the Master run straightway
And kneel, His feet to kiss.

O, Love ! that made Him come to save,
To hang on Calvary,
O mighty Love ! that from the grave
Did lift and set Him free !
Sing, Mary Magdalene, sing forth—
With voice so sweet and strong,
Sing, till it thrills through all the earth—
The Resurrection Song !



The Mother's Lecture

THERE'S *nothing*, did you say, Reuben?
There's nothing, nothing at all,
There's nothing to thank the Lord for
This disappointing fall.

For the frost it cut your corn down,
Right when 'twas looking best,
And then took half the garden,—
The drouth took all the rest.

The wheat was light as light could be,
Not half a proper crop,
Then the fire burned your fences,
And burned till it had to stop.

The cows were poor because the grass
Withered all up in the heat,
And cows are things that won't keep fat
Unless they have plenty to eat.

Suppose the frost did take the corn,
And the cattle are not fat,
Another harvest is coming—
You *might* thank the Lord for that.

THE MOTHER'S LECTURE

The fire that burned your fences down,
And laid your haystacks flat,
Left the old house above your head,
You *might* thank the Lord for that.

You've lost from field, and barn, and fold,
You've that word "loss" very pat,
But you've lost nothing from the home,—
You might thank the Lord for that.

And here is your mother at your side,
Braiding a beautiful mat,
I'm old, my boy, but with you yet—
You *might* thank the Lord for that.

Your wife is a good and patient soul,
Not given to worry or spat,
Nice to see, and pleasant to hear,
You *might* thank the Lord for that.

Here in the cradle at my side
Is something worth looking at,
She came this disappointing year,
You *might* thank the Lord for that.

Your boy is calling out, "Daddy!"
As hard as ever he can,
There's lots of folks would thank the Lord
For just such a bonnie man.

Ashamed of yourself, eh, Reuben ?

Well, I rather thought you'd be—
What ! going to keep Thanksgiving
In a manner good to see ?

To kill the biggest gobbler
That's strutting round the farm ?
To give poor folks provisions,
And clothes to keep them warm ?

You're going to help and comfort
Each sad old wight you find ?
You're feeling so rich and thankful,
And heaven has been so kind ?

Ah, now my own boy, Reuben,
I'm so glad we've had this chat,
You're growing so like your father—
You *might* thank the Lord for that.



Spring

O, THE frozen valley and frozen hill make a coffin
wide and deep,
And the dead river lies, all its laughter stilled
within it, fast asleep.

The trees that have played with the merry thing,
and freighted its breast with leaves,
Give never a murmur or sigh of woe—they are
dead—no dead thing grieves.

No carol of love from a song-bird's throat; the
world lies naked and still,
For all things tender, and all things sweet, have
been touched by the gruesome chill.

Not a flower,—a blue forget-me-not, a wild rose
or jessamine soft,
To lay its bloom on the dead river's lips, that
have kissed them all so oft,

But look, a ladder is spanning the space twixt
earth and the sky beyond,
A ladder of gold for the Maid of Grace—the
strong, the subtle, the fond!

SPRING

SPRING, with the warmth in her footsteps light,
and the breeze and the fragrant breath,
Is coming to press her radiant face to that
which is cold in death.

SPRING, with a mantle made of the gold held
close in a sunbeam's heart,
Thrown over her shoulders, bonnie and bare—
see the sap in the great trees start,
Where the hem of this flowing garment trails,
see the glow, the color bright,
A-stirring and spreading of something fair—the
dawn is chasing the night !

SPRING, with all love and all dear delights
pulsing in every vein,
The old earth knows her, and thrills to her
touch, as she claims her own again.

SPRING, with the hyacinths filling her cap, and
the violet seeds in her hair,
With the crocus hiding its satin head in her
bosom warm and fair ;

SPRING, with its daffodils at her feet, and
pansies a-bloom in her eyes,

SPRING, with enough of the God in herself to
make the dead to arise !

For see, as she bends o'er the coffin deep—the
frozen valley and hill—

The dead river stirs, Ah, that ling'ring kiss is
making its heart to thrill!

And then as she closer, and closer leans, it slips
from its snowy shroud,

Frightened a moment, then rushing away, call-
ing and laughing aloud!

The hill where she rested is all a-bloom—the
wood is green as of old,

And 'wakened birds are striving to send their
songs to the Gates of Gold.



Reminiscences

THERE came a dash of snow last night,
An' 'fore I went to bed,
I somehow got to thinkin' 'bout
That old place, Kettletread.
I'm silly 'bout that spot of earth,
Though why, I can't surmise,
For it has got me in more scrapes
And made me tell more lies,
When me, an' you,
An' Taylor's boys,
Were always in the spill,
A stealin' off
From work to go
A-coastin' down that hill.

Do you rec'lect how we used to stand
An' holler out like sin,
"Now one must pass that walnut stump

Afore the rest chips in ? ”
An’ if one tumbled in the snow, we only
 stopped to laugh,
An’ all the help we ever gave was
 aggravatin’ chaff.

Zip ! Zip ! the frost and snow
A pickin’ at our face,
The wind just howlin’ ’cause it knowed
’Twas beat fair in the race !

Good gracious ! Jim, if I could stand, a-
 lookin’ down that hill,
A-watchin’ you boys tumblin’ off an’ laughin’
 at the spill ;
An’ then grab up my Noah’s Ark, so clumsy
 and so wide,
An’ pull the rope, an’ hold her back, there
 let her go kerslide—

An’ see that glazy piece of ice
A-spannin’ that old crick,
An’ know I couldn’t stop this side
If ’twas to save my neck—

Now don’t you get excited, Jim, ’cause I’m
 a-talkin’ so,
That would be awful foolish—Gosh ! just
 hear that north wind blow.

Ammiel's Gift

THE City, girded by the mountain strong,
Still held the gold of sunset on its breast,
When Ammiel, whose steps had journeyed long,
Stood at the gate with weariness opprest.
One came and stood beside him, called him *son*,
Asked him the reason of his heavy air,
And why it was that, now the day was done,
He entered not into the city fair ?

Answered he, " Master, I did come to find
A man called Jesus ; it is said He steals
The darkness from the eyeballs of the blind,
The fever from the veins—Ay, even heals
That wasting thing called sickness of the heart.

His voice they say doth make the lame to leap,
The evil, tearing spirits to depart."

From Nain there comes a tale
Doth make me weep,

Of one a widow walking by the bier
Of her dead son, and walking there alone,
And murmuring, so that all who chose might hear,
"A widow and he was my only one!"

This Jesus, meeting her did not pass by,
But stopped beside the mourner for a space,
A wondrous light they say shone in His eye,
A wondrous tenderness upon His face;
And He did speak unto the dead, "Young man,
I say arise"—these tears of mine will start—
The youth arose, straight to his mother ran,
Who wept for joy and clasped him to her heart.

Within me, Master,
Such a longing grew
To look on Him, perchance to speak His name,
I started while the world was wet with dew,
A gift for Him—Ah, I have been to blame,
For when a beggar held a lean hand out for aid,
I laid in it, being moved, a goodly share
Of this same gift, and then a little maid
Lisped she was hungry, in her eyes a prayer,
I gave her *all* the fruit I plucked for Him,
His oil I gave to one who moaned with pain,
His jar of wine to one whose sight waxed dim—
O, Master, I have journeyed here in vain!

Within the city Jesus walks the street,
Or bides with friends, or in the temple stands,
But shamed am I the Nazarene to meet,
Seeing I bring to Him but empty hands.

The sun had long since sunk behind the hills—
The purple glory and the gleams of light
Had faded from the sky, the dusk that stills
A busy world was deep'ning into night.

"Son, look on me," the sweetness of the tone
Made Ammiel's heart begin to thrill and glow,
"Full well," he said, "I know there is but One
With simple words like these could move me so."
"Son, look on me," and lifting up his eyes
He looked on Jesu's face, and knew 'twas He,
Knelt down and kissed His feet, and would not rise
Because of love and deep humility.

Up in the deep blue of the skies above
Were kindled all the watchfires of the night
The voice of Jesus, deep and filled with love,
Said, "Come, bide with me till the morning's light.
At dawn my beggar asked not alms in vain,
Since dawn, have I been debtor unto thee,
All day thy gifts within my heart have lain,
Fruit, oil, and wine, come through my poor to me.'

Robin

THERE'S not a leaf on the vine where you swing
And the wind is chill and the sky is grey,
But all undaunted you flutter and sing,
"Ho, the first of May! Ho, the first of May!"
There's never a hint of yesterday's frost,
Of the hunger and cold and waiting long,
Never a plaint over what you have lost
Thrown into the notes of your happy song;
The gladness is pressed in your bosom red,
And the gloss is laid on your little head.
I thank you for singing, robin to-day,
For flaunting before me, jolly and bold,
Chirping, "Ho! Ho! do you know it is May,
Or are you so dull you have to be told?"

Margot

NOW Margot, dinna flout me,
O, dinna be unkind !
Mayhap to do without me,
A hardship you would find.

Ye haud yer head too high, lass,
Ye haud yer head too high,
What if I wad pass by, lass,
Instead o' lingerin' nigh ?

Ye canna quite forget, dear,
The sunny days o' yore,
They haud our twa lives yet, dear,—
The days that are no more.

When in the warld sae wide, dear,
One lesson we could spell—
When it was a' our pride, dear,
To love each other well.

When riches had na found ye—
My maid o' tender face !
Before yer pride had bound ye,
An' stolen a' yer grace.

'Tis best that I should leave ye,
Cold are your eyes o' blue,
'Twould be a sin to grieve ye,
A love sae warm an' true.

Sae put yer hand within mine,
Forget—we can but try,
Here's ane kiss for auld lang syne,
And here's ane for good-bye.

What is it that you say, dear,
You will not let me go ?
Then ye maun bid me stay, dear,
This much to me ye owe.

Twa foolish things were we, dear,
To dream that we could part,
The blind might almost see, dear,
Your image in my heart.

So haud me close and fast, dear,
With arms so soft an' white,
A fig for quarrels past, dear,
You are my ain to-night.

Dreamland

WITH an angel-flower laden,
Every day a little maiden,
Sails away from off my bosom
On a radiant sea of bliss.
I can see her drifting, drifting—
Hear the snowy wings uplifting,
As he woos her into dreamland,
With a kiss.

Blissful hour, my pretty sleeper,
Whispering with thy angel keeper,
List'ning to the words he brings thee
From a fairer world than this ;
Ah ! thy heart he is beguiling,
I can tell it by thy smiling,
As he woos thee into dreamland
With a kiss.

Could there come to weary mortals
Such a glimpse through golden portals,
Would we not drift on forever,
Toward that far-off land of peace ;
Would we not leave joys and sorrows,
Glad to-days, and sad to-morrows,
For the sound of white wings lifting,
For an angel's tender kiss.

Only a Picture

SOMETHING to show me—well, my lass,
Make haste, I have no time to idle,
These bright spring hours they seem to pass
Like colts that fly from bit and bridle.

A picture—well, if that is all,
I can't—my child don't look so sorry,
I'll come and see, although I call
The whole thing only waste and worry.

But have your nonsense while you may,
Your brushes, paints, and long-haired master,
They're pretty whims for you who see
Such beauty in a canvas plaster.

What's in a picture? there's but one
Could win for me an hour's gazing;
It comes sometimes when day is done,
And dusk falls on the cattle grazing.

A big, old house that fronts the sea,
The sunlight falling on the gables,
The wood—what's this? Why, can it be!
Lass, you have neatly turned the tables.

Know it? Ay, know each blade and stalk,
Each sunny knoll, each shady cover,
Why, every flower beside yon walk
Has had in me a faithful lover!

Know it? See yonder worn old step,
The open door, the bench beside it,
The rose-tree trained where it should creep—
I almost see the hand that tied it.

The sunny windows seem to throw
On me a tender look of greeting,
And in my heart awakes the glow
Of other days so glad and fleeting.

The dear old faces, one by one,
Come out from shadows swiftly thronging,
Dear picture of my boyhood's home,
My eyes are dim with love and longing!



Her Boy

THERE'S a looking-glass, a hammer,
Some toys all broken up,
There's pebbles, and glass, and sawdust,
And papa's shaving cup ;
A little cart with the wheels off,
A horse that's lost an eye,
A kitten tied to a chair-leg
That's looking scared and shy.

“ Ah me ! ” the busy mother sighs,
I'm tired off my feet,
I really wish he were grown up
So I could keep things neat !
He catches her reproving eye
And is inclined for play,
So dons his bonnet wrong, and cries
“ Bye, baby's goin' away ! ”

The mother holds her darling close—
A culprit, cute and small—
For wild disorder reigning there
She does not care at all.
But, spendthrift with a mother's love,
Puts kisses on his lips,
And on the cheeks so warm and red,
On neck, and finger-tips.

Perhaps she thinks of coming years,
When in no childish play
Her boy shall bid her a good-bye,
Her baby go away,
To walk without her tender care
To shelter every move,
To stand without his hand in hers—
Away from home and love.

“ I loves you bestest in the world ! ”
He lisps with pretty wiles,
“ Thank God he’s but a baby yet ! ”
The mother says, and smiles.



The Indian Girl

NOW to the missionary's home there came one
autumn day,

A girl, borne in the arms of one so haggard,
worn, and gray.

“White man,” he said, “the fever burns my
little sunbeam up,

Naught ask I for myself, not bread nor water
from a cup,

But give to her some healing thing, I leave
her in your care,

Deal kindly with her, one harsh touch will
bring revenge—beware ! ”

Ere they could answer yea or nay, the old
chief he had gone,

Had vanished in the gloom of night which
came so swiftly on.

They could not stay the hand of death, its
touch was on her brow,

O, bearer of the message true, here's one to
listen now !

The Indian maiden heard it all, and looked
with wondering eyes,

How sweet to her the story of the life beyond
the skies !

Her eager throbbing heart drank in each
precious promise given,
An Indian girl, a child of God, heir to a
throne in heaven ?
The joyful tears crept to her eyes, and down
her dusky cheeks,
And all aglow with love and joy, in her soft
tongue she speaks,
“Now I will tell my father, now I will tell
him all
That I have heard of Jesus, who hears us
when we call,
He does not know of Heaven, how happy we
will be,
When, by and by, the Brother kind will bring
him home to me.
“When he sits down beside me he looks so
stern and lone,
For I, his child, am dying, his last and only
one.”
At twilight of another day he came—erect
and tall,
As though he would not bow his head though
heavy blows might fall,
But soft the glance and tender, he threw upon
his child,

“My little Sunbeam in the dark !” he said, in accents mild.

“Come closer, Oh my father,” the Indian maiden cried,

Come closer while I tell you of One who loved and died

That we might live together, and never grieve in vain,

Of One who suffered cruel blows to rescue us from pain.”

Her fevered hands crept into his ; his heart grew sick with fear,

The hour of parting and of grief was surely drawing near,

This child who shared his cup and couch—his “ Sunbeam in the night ”

Would go, and never come again to gladden his dim sight.

“No gold have I,” the old chief said, “ but name the Friend so good,

That I may prove an Indian brave forgets not gratitude.”

There, in the silence of the night he heard the story old,

Of Christ's dear love for sinful man, the
 sweetest ever told ;
And when the sun came creeping up all
 glorious to the eye,
His haughty soul had learned to say, " It is
 not much to die."

It is but evening to a land whose shores are
 always green,
Where never night comes darkly down, where
 tears are never seen,
Where heartbreak may not even touch, where
 sorrow may not come,
But where the weary rest and say, " 'Tis good
 to be at home ! "



Some Joys We May Not Keep

“SOMETHING is lost to me,” she said, “ that
nevermore

Will be my very own,
Something has swiftly slipped through my
heart’s door,
And to the winds has flown.

“Loss was the kindest thing that fate could
send—

Some joys we may not keep—
And yet, because this is the very end,
I needs,” she said, “ must weep.

“Feeling my heart so empty and so chill—
There is no glow to-night,
No wakening of the old-time tender thrill,
No pulsing of delight.

“When death hides from our eyes a much
loved face,
We let our tears fall fast,
And then we take each sign, each ling ’ring
trace,
And seal it up—so—‘ Past.’

“And I must put the memories away,
The toys love left behind,
The sweets we shared upon a summer day ;
The kiss, the faith so blind.

“I was so rich, so proud, awhile ago,
And now, I am so poor,
O, empty heart, there's nothing now to do
But just to close the door !”



In Sunflower Time

IN the farmhouse kitchen were Nan and John,
With only the sunflowers looking on.

Now, a farm-house kitchen is scarce the place
For a knight or lady of courtly grace.

But this was a common, everyday pair
That held the old kitchen, this morning fair.

A persistent and saucy thorn-tree limb
Had sacrificed a part of the brim

Of the youth's straw hat, so his face was brown,
Save his well-shaped forehead, which wore a
frown,

And his boots were splashed with the mud and
clay

Of the marsh land pastures, over the way,

Where the alders tall, and the spicewood grew,
And the frogs croaked noisily all night through.

'Neath the muslin curtains, snowy and thin,
The big homely sunflowers nodded in.

Nan was worth the watching, her gingham gown
Had, it may be, old-fashioned grown,

But it fitted the slender shape so well,
Was low at the neck where the soft lace fell ;

Of sleeves, it had none, from the elbow down,
While in length—well, *you see, the maid had
grown.

A labor of love was her homely task
To share it, no mortal need hope or ask,
For Nan she was washing each trace of dirt
From fluted bodice, and ruffled skirt.

There are few that will, and fewer that can,
Bend over a tub like our pretty Nan,

As she took each piece from its frothy lair,
The soap bubbles flying high in the air,

And rubbed in a cruel, yet tender way,
Till her curls were wet with the steam and spray,

Then wrung with her two hands, slender and
strong,

Examined with care, and shook slowly and long,

Then flung in clear water to lie in state—
Each dainty piece met with the same hard fate.

“There ! ” and she gave a look of conscious pride
At the rinsing-bucket, so deep and wide,

Then wiping the suds from each rounded arm,
She turned to the youth with a smile so warm ;

“I have kept you waiting, excuse me please—
The soap suds just ruin such goods as these.”

“And you are so fond of finery, Nan,
Nice dresses, and furbelows,” he began.

“Ah, maybe I am, of a truth,” she said,
And each sunflower nodded its golden head.

“Well, Ned Brown’s getting rich,” John’s words
came slow,

“And, he’s loved you a long while as you know ;

My house and my acres, I held them fast,
Was so stubborn over them to the last,

For when my father was carried forth,
And the men were asking, ‘ what was he
worth ? ’

I knew that they said, with a nod and a smile,
As they whispered together all the while,

“Tis a fine old homestead, but mortgaged so,
What a foolish thing for a man to do ! ’

And I said, my father is dead and gone,
But he’s left behind him a strong-armed son,

And my heart was hot with a purpose set,
To pay off that mortgage, to clear off that debt.

I've worked, heaven knows it, like any slave,
I've learned well the lesson of pinch and save,
I've kept a good horse, but dressed like a
clown—

I haven't a dollar to call my own.

O, I'm beaten—well beaten ! yesterday
Everything went to Ned Brown from me ;

My meadows, my acres of tassled corn,
The big orchard planted when I was born.

What I would have saved had I had the choice,
Was my chestnut mare, for she knows your
voice.

So I'm only a beggar, Nan, you see—
Don't fancy I'm begging for sympathy,

You see for yourself that I don't care much—
Thank God, health's a thing the law can't touch!

Why ! the happiest man I ever knew
Was born a beggar—and died one too."

And so wisely nodding each yellow head
The sunflowers they listened to what was said,
As Nan in her careful and easy way,
In the old farmhouse kitchen that summer day,

Set a great and a mighty problem forth—
“Tell me the truth, John, how much am I
worth?”

The question has stood since the world began
With Adam, a lone and a lonesome man.

Now the sunbeams kissing her golden hair,
Her cheeks, and her round arms dimpled and
bare,

Seemed stamping a value of mighty wealth
On youth and love, and the bloom of health.

John looked, and looked, till his eyes grew dim,
Then tilted the hat with the worthless brim,

To hide what he would not have her see,
“You’re—you’re just worth the whole world,
Nan,” said he.

“Then you are no beggar”—O sweet, bold Nan!
“You’re *the whole world richer than any man.*”

Now, a girl queen wearing a crown of gold
Did something like this, so the tale is told;

But no royal prince that the world has seen
Ever felt quite so proud as John, I ween,

As he clasped both her hands with new-born
hope—

Hands all crinkley with water and soap.

Only the sunflowers, now looking on,
So—he kissed the maiden, O foolish John !

As he hastened out through the garden gate,
Ned Brown was just coming to learn his fate.

He was riding a handsome chestnut mare
But, somehow, our John didn't seem to care.

Ned thought of the acres he'd won from John,
“Poor beggar,” he said, and rode slowly on ;

John thought of all he had won from Ned,
“O you poor, poor beggar,” was what he said.

Why ? Under the heavens smiling and blue,
Only John and the yellow sunflowers knew.



As It Began to Dawn

MARY MAGDALENE.

A COWARD heart I carry in my breast,
Think you the soldiers stern will let us put
These spices that we carry, in his grave,
Or will they drive us hence ?

See how I start
If but the breeze shakes on my head,
From limb or vine, the heavy drops of dew—
Art weary Mary, weary and afraid ?

MARY.

Nay, but so heavy-hearted, and so lost
To hope, so full of horrors was that day,
So full of grief, the mem'ry of it all
Will weigh upon me till my life is done.
And if I close my eyes, I see in dreams
His arms stretched out upon that cross so wide,
His head, His kingly head, crowned with the thorns.

MARY MAGDALENE.

Hush, Mary,
Or I drop upon the ground in weakness.
My friend ! my tender, and my faithful friend !
When down thy forehead crept those crimson drops
The agony was more than I could bear.
'Tis said that Peter and the rest did sleep,

Did sleep and take their rest that last night in
Gethsemane, leaving Him there to keep
His watch alone. O, poverty of love !
Think, Mary, had we heard that sobbing prayer
Could we have slept and our Lord sorrowful ?

MARY.

Nay, we would but have had one thought, to share
His grief, to comfort and to cheer,

But man
Is dull at conning tasks of tenderness,
He is well qualified to guard with sword,
But not to keep long watches in the night ;
His, is the strength to fight, ours, is the strength
To wait, and waiting, hold our faith in love.
They loved Him well, but being men they slept.

A loneliness
Grows on me as the dawn
Lights hill and valley, and the fertile plain.
His feet have pressed the paths, oft has He gone
Down this way to the gate, oft has He sought
The stillness, and the quiet of that mount
Lifting its head to heaven—Mount Olivet—
And always will there be on Calvary
The heavy shadow of a cross of wood,
And if a hardy flower blossomed there,
Blood red its hue would be.

MARY MAGDALENE.

Surely it shuddered as it felt His weight,
That heavy cross on which He hung till eve !
How could they plunge the spear into His side,
And mock at Him with all their cruel tongues ?

O, Mary,

When I think of His dear hands
That ever held out succor to the lost,—
That ever touched to heal the sons of men,—
That ever took the burden and the pain
From heavy hearts—His strong and tender hands
That lifted up the fallen and the weak,
That dwelt in blessing on the little ones,
That broke the bread to feed a multitude,—
Wounded and hurt, the sharp nails through each
palm,
My heart, it breaks with pity and with woe !

MARY.

I wonder if he saw us standing there,
So weak, and helpless, and so buffeted.
One soldier pulled the covering from my head,
Another scoffed, ' O woman ye are fools ! '
And yet another, ' Look now at your King ! '
I cared not, nay, was glad to feel that we
Shared in his trial, feared not their contempt,

I hope He saw us, that He understood
That love and faith were one with such as we.
When He cried out, I thought upon a day
When He did come to rest Himself with us,
The harvest fields were yellow, and the sun
Beat down so fiercely that it hurt the head
Of Ruth's fair little one. 'The pain !' he cried,
'The pain ! the pain !!' with hot tears on his
cheek,

And Ruth did lift him up and run with him
To where the Master was, who pushed the curls
Back with His hands and touched the forehead
white,

The crying ceased, the quiver left the eyes,
The pallor crept away from off the cheek—
He fell asleep, a smiling, healthy child.

MARY MAGDALENE.

And I thought of a day when He did meet
A woman, in her youth, but lost to all
The joys of innocence. Love she had known,
Such love as leaves the life filled full of shame,
Passion was hers, hate and impurity,
The gnawing of remorse, the longing vain
To lose the mark of sin, the scarlet flush
Of fallen womanhood, the hatred of

The spotless, the desire that they might sink
Low in the mire as she. O, what a soul
She carried on that day ! The women drew
Their robes back from her touch, men leered,
And little children seemed afraid to meet
The devilish beauty of her form and face.

Shunned and alone,
Till One came to her side,
And took her hand in His, and what He said
Is past the telling ; there are things the soul
Knows well, but cannot blazon to the world.
And when He went His way, upon her brow
Where shame had lain, set the sweet word, *For-
giveness.*

And Mary Magdalene
Did follow Him, led by a wondrous love,
Did wash His tender feet with grateful tears,
And wipe them with the soft hairs of her head.

MARY.

Joseph of Arimathea laid his form
In a new tomb. I tremble as we come
So near ! and tell me, do you note a light,
Fairer than dawn, is cast on all things here.
Behold ! one sits upon the stone, robed all
In white, a wondrous radiance on His face,
I fear and am perplexed. Let us go back.

MARY MAGDALENE.

Nay, we must put these spices in His grave—
My fears have gone and left me strong and bold,
Let us advance and question him, for he
Is some good angel keeping watch and ward,
It may be he has caused the heavy stone
To roll away that we might enter in
With love's last offering. What doth he say ?

MARY.

He says that Jesus is alive to-day,
And bids us come and see the empty grave,
O, what a joy, if this were only true !
But, 'tis too great a mystery. Come hence,
Someone hath borne away our Lord,
To wrest from us the sorrowful delight
Of looking on His face, dead. with the lines
Of mortal agony on brow and lips,
Oh, Mary Magdalene, the world's strong hate
Might well have spared us this last cruel blow !

MARY MAGDALENE.

But it may be

The angel tells us true,

And that He has arisen from the grave,
And is alive to love and keep His own—
O, blessed hope ! which all my being yearns

To grasp and hold—for if He is alive,
It means that you, and I, and all that love
And hold their faith in Him, can never die.

MARY.

I never understood what He did mean
By Life Eternal. So many things I had
Hid in my heart to ask Him.

MARY MAGDALENE.

Look how the sunshine sweeps down on the world!
There never was a yesterday so fair,
Something within me answers to the glow—
And answers to the glad songs of the birds—
And something seems to call out sweet and clear
The night is gone—is gone! the night is gone!!

MARY.

I am amazed! the tears have quickly dried upon
your cheek.

I thought your grief was strong,
Too strong to lose itself in Nature's smile,
The dazzling sunlight, and the song of birds,
The fair——

MARY MAGDALENE.

Hush! 'tis our Lord himself who comes this way,
The wounds made by the thorns still on His brow,
His hands and feet marked with the cruel nails.

MARY.

It is the Master and my fears are gone—
O, hark ! He speaks. How often have we heard
That voice so filled with peace and tenderness ?
Dear Lord, we fall and worship at Thy feet.

MARY MAGDALENE.

O risen Son of God !
Give me one hand pierced on the cross for me,
That I may place it on my heart and say,
For my transgression was He wounded sore,
Bruised, shamed, and hurt for my iniquity.

MARY.

We walked, O Master, in a maze of doubt,
Misgiving, grief, and great perplexity,
Knowing not where to turn, what to believe,
Then, through the tumult did we hear Thee say,
'All Hail !' O, words of cheer ! O, greeting, glad !

MARY MAGDALENE.

These words shall be a song—a song of joy
For a sad world to sing, a glorious song
Of triumph, and immortality,
The glad notes shall ring clearly up to heaven,
And echo down through hell. All Hail !
The Son of God
Hath left the grave and given us Life,
All Hail !

Her Lesson

SOMEONE had told her that a sea-nymph dwelt
Within a murmuring shell, she called her own,
And she did love to hold it to her ear,
And always she could catch the meaning of
Its song.

When she was gay the nymph she thought
Sang joyously, when she was sad at heart
The murmuring voice seemed full of plaint and
tears.

One day, when longings softly stirred her breast,
She took the shell down to the shore and sat
Listening to all the things it had to tell,
Till, by-and-by, so homesick grew the voice
That called back to the waves when they did
call,

A pity for its loneliness did make
Her suddenly resolve to set it free,
So with a stone she brake the shell in twain,
'Twas empty as the air.

Who was it told
Her such a fair untruth—a pretty lie?
A mist fell down upon the wooded hills,

And crept from thence out over all the sea,
Her soft eyes caught it in their depth and held
It prisoner, till presently it grew
Too strong and subtle for the wide white lids
Which made but timid trembling sentinels,
And let it slip to liberty unchallenged.
The light unfeeling waves about her feet
Laughed at her grieving over such a thing—
Laughed, calling to her as they rushed and ran,
 “O pretty little one !
That one bright day
Didst think thyself so wise—didst count thyself
So rich ? O foolish, foolish child, to weep
And break thy little heart o’er something that
Is not—has never been, save, in thy thought ! ”



Until We Meet

DEAR one, who crossed the border land
 Into a world of love and song,
One of the tender white-robed band
 To whom eternal joys belong !
Thy memory lives within my heart,
 Will live until thy face I see ;
The two worlds lie not far apart,
 I soon will be at home with thee.

His Care

GRACIOUS the sceptre that He wields,
Heart ! do you understand ?
All, all is His—His great arm shields
That which is bare, and that which yields,
Lord is He of the harvest fields,
And of the barren land.

With Her Sunshine, Breeze and Dew

J OYOUS May has come again
With her sunshine, breeze and dew,
Holding up her silken train,
See the blossoms, sweet and new.
Here a yellow primrose shows
All the world a heart of gold,
There a scarlet tulip glows,
By the breeze made overbold.

Joyous May, we welcome you,
Welcome you and all you bring,
Skies so shining and so blue,
Birds to twitter and to sing,
Children on the green to play,
Blushing maid, and eager swain,
At your coming, joyous May,
All the world grows young again.

What the Poppies Said

“WE have to-day,” so the poppies said
To the west wind softly blowing,
“To-day to hold, in our bosom red,
The great white tears that the night has shed
And the sunbeams warm and glowing.”

“We have to-day,” said the lover bold,
“To spell out the sweet old story,
My heart for thine, and the tale is told—
O, be not, sweetheart, so shy and cold,
See, the world is filled with glory !”

The west wind sighed to the sea that night,
“’Tis a thought to give one sorrow,
The poppy boasts of her pearls of white,
The lover his store of dear delight,
But neither whispers *to-morrow*.

Eve

SHE is an ideal daughter—mind you, friend,
You must not from my words infer she has
No faults. No angel is my Eve, not she,
But just a faulty fair thing, sweet of face,
And warm of heart, and with a tender flame
In her true eyes so innocent of guile,
With laughter on her lips, and loving words,
With something in each mood to draw
One's soul the closer to her. Wondrous big
Her nature is—she's something *more* than
kind.

If sorrow touches me in any way
It is to her I turn for comforting ;
If sickness stretches me upon my bed,
And steals my strength and spirits quite away,
I want her near me with her slim cool hands,
Her zeal to nurse me back to health again,
Her smoothing of the pillows underneath
My head, that I may rest the easier ;
To her this world is such a pretty place
She likes no one to leave it ere he must.

So plies her remedies with wondrous skill,
And talks the while of pleasant homely
things—

The tasks that tarry for my getting well,
The garden showing plainly my neglect,
The swarming bees, the apple trees in bloom,
The lonesome collie blinking in the sun,
The filly being broken for the plough,
My southdown sheep, the green of barley
fields,
My neighbors, and the daily wish that I
Might soon be out among them as of old.

This is the sort of nurse the sick man needs,
Not one who is forever breathing sighs,
And talking of the emptiness of life,
And urging one to wean his thoughts from
earth,
Nor care a jot for life, since it is such
An empty, barren, disappointing thing.
Life! why, 'tis God's good gift to each of us,
And some, I think, show much ingratitude
By slurring it forever with the wish
That they were rid of it for good and all.

Now, you have mortgages, and deeds, and
bonds,
You have a lordly mansion of your own,
While I—I have a big old-fashioned house,
And a few fields. You sometimes look at me
And sigh to think I am not better off

In this world's goods. Old friend I like you well
 And would not have you waste your pity so ;
 Why, man, I'm all amazed that you are not
 Quite envious of me, since I have got—
 What you do lack—a daughter of my own.

It makes a man feel rich to have a girl
 Like mine to pet and make ado of him,
 To come about him with her tender ways,
 And cozening, and pretty tricks of speech,
 To cry a little when he goes away,
 To watch for his return with eager eyes,
 To come to him with laughter on her lips—
 Ay, and sometimes a pout that shows itself
 But to be kissed away—to keep his heart
 From growing old with all the years that pass.

I would not give this little Eve of mine
 For *twenty* times her weight in solid gold,
 'Tis a good world—you do not wonder now
 That I'm so jolly and content alway ;
 You're sighing like a furnace—'tis too bad !
 I wish, old friend, you were as rich as I—
 With such a glad young thing to come and lay
 Her rosy cheek to yours when you are sad !
 The man who has no daughter of his own
 Is such a pauper, I could cry for him.

Ring Out Glad Song

(A Diamond Jubilee Ode, 1897)

A PERFECT joy, the sages say,
Is more contagious than a grief ;
A joy exceeding all belief
Is reigning in the world to-day.
Joy ! See it spread on every side
The sea-girt Isles, so grand and proud,
Joy ! Hear it paeon sweet and loud
Go swelling—swelling—far and wide ;
It is the YEAR of JUBILEE !
Ring out glad song o'er land and sea ;
God save our Good Victoria !

Old England warms now, through and through,
The rugged thing is full of love,
And pregnant with the thoughts that move
The great soul of a nation true,
Whom God's hand hath been leading on
Through all the centuries dim and grey,
From ages dark, to dusk of dawn,
And then to full and perfect day.
It is the YEAR of JUBILEE !
Ring out glad song o'er land and sea ;
God save our Good Victoria !

And green-clad Erin lifts her voice—
Full sweet the words ring on her tongue—
She will be always fair and young—
And always ready to rejoice.

The lochs, the streams, the granite hills,
Of bonnie Scotland are aglow,
(Stronghold of loyalty you know)

And to the sky the paeon thrills :

It is the YEAR of JUBILEE !

Ring out glad song o'er land and sea ;

God save our Good Victoria !

East, West, North, South, it seems to float,
And pulses stir, and mem'ries wake,

“For God and merrie England's sake,”

How oft has rung that battle note !

But ah, a grander measure moves

This glad old world of ours to-day,

Rings through the wilds—through palm tree groves

And rugged north lands far away :

It is the YEAR of JUBILEE !

Ring out glad song o'er land and sea ;

God save our Good Victoria !

Rings through the solitudes so lone,
Through places all aglow with bloom,

RING OUT GLAD SONG

Through dim, waste tracts where lurks the gloom—
From Southern shores to Arctic Zone.

O mighty Empire, stretching far,
On solid, grand, foundations laid,
In love with peace, yet not afraid
To meet, if needs, grim visaged war.

*It is the YEAR of JUBILEE ;
Ring out glad song o'er land and sea ;
God save our Good Victoria !*

Australia hears it as she stands
Fanned by the sea-winds all around,
And sends a voice to swell the sound
From fertile fields and pasture lands.

In Canada—blest spot of earth—
Joy revels on this perfect day,
And all aflame with pride of birth,
She sings out in her lusty way ;

*It is the YEAR of JUBILEE ;
Ring out glad song o'er land and sea ;
God save our Good Victoria !*

The shadows long ago have fled,
Her song goes ringing clear and sweet,
From the Atlantic at her feet,
To the Pacific at her head ;

From meadow wide, from forest tall,
From hill-top high and valley deep,
From rapids with their whirling sweep,
From river, lake, and waterfall :

It is the YEAR of JUBILEE!

*Ring out glad song o'er land and sea ;
God save our Good Victoria!*

O Queen ! we could not give thee less,
Well hast thou earned by noble thought,
By noble deeds thy hand hath wrought,
Our homage—and our tenderness.
Thy mother heart must thrill and move
To note the gladness of the time,
Hear thy name sung in every clime
By voices solemn—sweet with love.

It is the YEAR of JUBILEE!

*Ring out glad song o'er land and sea ;
God save our Good Victoria!*



In the Conservatory

WE came out of the dusk and gloom,
Into the glowing fragrant room,
Walled in and carpeted with bloom.

A merry group we made that day—
Our laughter rang out clear and gay,
For we were young and it was May.

My cousin Dora walked with me—
Late from her home across the sea,
And fair as any flower was she.

Each pansy lifted up its face,
The slim fern shook her gown of lace,
A glory spread through all the place.

My lady, Lily's waxen bell,
Bent down, ashamed to hear us tell
How sweet her color, and her smell.

The palms stood up like courtiers tall,
The smilax crept along the wall,
A sunbeam stole and kissed it all.

"Now Dora, we shall see," I said,
"The Persian violet lift her head,
Blaze out in purple and in red !

The people seek her eagerly,
A rare aristocrat is she,
Proud of her fame as proud can be."

"So many tongues her praises sing,"
Said Dora, through the world they ring,
She looks a heartless haughty thing,"

"Her country cousins sweet and shy,
That get their color from the sky,
Are fairer than herself," said I.

And last of all we came to where
The lilac and the primrose fair
Their breath threw on the heavy air.

My cousin slipped the rows between,
Where yellow blossoms made a screen
Of their own foliage thick and green.

"Ah! this," she said, "is a surprise,
An English primrose"—soft her eyes,
"Mark what a beauty in it lies!"

"O, primroses!" in careless tone,
Said Nell, "I've often seen them grown
Much prettier than this small pale one."

My cousin bent her soft white cheek
Against the blossoms, pale and meek,
And still she stood and did not speak.

I think a tear or two she shed,
Ere lifted was the golden head,
“Poor little homesick flowers ! ” she said.

“I wonder do you droop, and dream
Of fleecy cloud, and sunny gleam,
Of meadow wide, and laughing stream.

I wonder if you wait to hear
The children’s voices, shrill and clear—
Sweet ! homesickness is hard to bear.”

Then, gave us all a half-shamed look,
Ah, I could read her like a book,
Her heart was in some old world nook.

“It wants to feel,” she said, “the touch
Of dew, and sunlight, and all such—
Of wind that fondles overmuch.

But by-and-by it will get bold,
And show you people all the gold
Its pretty heart does surely hold.”

Back at my side she took her place,
And looking at her, I could trace
An added sweetness in her face.

We came into the dusk and gloom,
Out of the glowing fragrant room,
Walled in and carpeted with bloom.

A Bud

DID the angel pluck thee, my blossom fair,
Ere the morning sun had spent its glow,
While the dew of heaven lay bright and clear
In each folded leaf? Ah, the angels know,
They gather our sweetest, our heart's delight
To bloom where there cometh not frost nor blight.



Envy

WHEN Satan sends—to vex the mind of man
And urge him on to meanness and to wrong—
His satellites, there is not one that can
Acquit itself like Envy. Not so strong
As lust, so quick as fear, so big as hate—
A pigmy thing, the twin of sordid greed—
Its work, all noble things to under-rate,
Decry fair face, fair form, fair thought, fair deed,
A sneer it has for what is highest, best,
For love's soft voice, and virtue's robe of white;
Truth is not true, and pity is not kind,
A great task done is but a pastime light.
Tormented, and tormenting is the mind
That grants to Envy room to make its nest.

A Fancied Loss

IF some day in your heart is born the thought
That one held dear is careless of the gift
Of tenderness, so fully, freely given,
I pray you, friend, to strangle it at birth.

There are no losses half so real to us,
As losses which are not—have never been—
A friendship gone ! we say, and drop a tear
For wasted faith, and love, and loyalty.

When, if we did but know the simple truth,
The gladness in these foolish hearts of ours—
The gladness and the full content would leave
No room for sadness, and no place for doubt.

How Close?

HOW close will Jesus come to thee?
So close thine eyes can trace
The wondrous love He has for thee,
Upon His shining face.

How close will Jesus come to thee?
So close that thou canst feel
The sense of safety that He brings
O'er all thy being steal.

How close will Jesus come to thee?
So close that thou canst hear
The whisper of His tender voice
Ring softly on thine ear.

How close will Jesus come to thee?
So close that doubts will cease—
Thy soul with sorrow weighed, and sin,
Find healing—joy—and peace.

In the Wood

TO me, there comes a time in leafy June
When nature calls from wood, and stream,
and field,
Calls low at dawn, calls loud and clear at noon,
Calls most persuasively when stars come out
Up in the blue, and other voices hush,
And *Come!* I hear her say, *come out with me,*
Come leave the low cramped rooms, the weary
task,
Come take the path through meadow, and through
wood,
Climb up the breezy hills and look abroad,
Climb down into the valleys deep and wide
And rest a space! There is no rest so full
As that which I will give you as you lie
On grassy knoll; I'll give for lullaby
The rustle of the leaves tossed by the wind,
For covering the sunbeams meshed and snared
By waving boughs; I'll fill your lungs with air
Made fragrant in the bowers I call my own.
Come! Come! I'll keep you company, I have
A potion brewed, a wondrous healing thing,

I went, I left the city far behind,
I went because she called—my fair first love !
I went at sunrise that for one full day
I might be with her, thrill beneath her touch,
As in the long ago when she did claim
The full affection of my untried youth.

I found the thick wood steeped in pleasant
smells,
The dainty ferns hid in their sheltered nooks,
The wild flowers found the sunlight where they
stood,

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A noisy world I knew was waiting me,
But no sound from it reached me as I went
By tangled pathway through that wilderness.

At noon I came out to the fields, sat down
And ate my lunch with hearty appetite,
Just at the foot of a wide hill which hid
The highway quite from sight, and shut me in.

A meadow stretched itself out in the sun,
Each little blade of green did thrust its face
Up to the glow. The clover heads bent down
To let their visitors—the bees—pass out,
The heavy-footed honey bees. Ah, fond
Are they of the sweet juices stored in fragrant
phials !

So fond, that in the breeze they smell them out
And straightway sally forth to taste the same,
And carry samples home. Down in the grass
A thousand insects hummed ; a shallow stream
Laughed in the sunshine, speeding o'er the stones
To find the coolness of the shady wood.

The cattle laid their wide mouths to its breast
And slaked their thirst, and made their dappled
sides

Swell out ; then lowing forth their full content
They turned again to wade through knee-deep
grass.

From off her four warm eggs of mottled shade,
A bird flew, with a call of love and joy,
That drew from her proved mate, perched on a
bough

Too slight to hold him and his weight of song,
An answering note, replete with tenderness,
That sent the echo of its sweetness on
Into the dim old wood. A wild-rose spread
Its greenness o'er a corner of the fence,
And hung its tinted blossoms out to grace
The lowly spot, and make of it a bower.

But fairer than the meadow or the wood—
Than wild-rose blooming by the zig-zag fence—
Than nesting bird, or softly murmuring stream—
Than cattle standing knee-deep in the grass—
Than dew-washed fern, or golden-hearted flowers—
Fairer than sunbeam's mesh or dappled shade—
Or aught that I had seen this day of days
Was she, the glad young thing whose buoyant
feet
Trod the slim path which wound its changeful
way
Down the tall hill, past alders all abloom.

A girl, a young girl, is a gracious sight,
A thing to make the eye light gaily up,

We see our youth in her— the joy of youth
Smiles out at us from her white-lidded eyes,
The careless grace of youth is on her lips,
The innocence of youth shines on her brow,
The prettiness of youth is on her cheek,
Her softness is the softness of a flower,
Her brightness and her beauty have the fresh
And healthy glow of morn. Her laughter stirs
A host of memories sleeping in our heart,
And makes a present hour of some far-off,
Some dear and half-forgotten yesterday.

I wonder if the day will ever come
When we will be so old—so old and dull
That we will listen to, yet never heed
The sweetest sound of all the sounds which ring
Out through this world's big aisles—the rippling
laugh

Which comes from red young lips—comes straight
from some
Rich storehouse in the breast, a storehouse filled
With gladness great, and hope, and all things
good?

She stopped to pluck a bouquet for her gown
From the sweetbriar that nodded in the sun,
And presently I heard a little "Oh!"
Of pain. That hand of hers the briar in greed

Had caught, and held so closely that its mark
Showed plainly on the warm and pink-palmed
thing.

But she did pluck it, and its fragrance found
A place among the white folds at her neck,
And in the silken girdle which did creep
About the rounded slimness of her waist.

Then down she sat to rest her for awhile,
And I could hear her crooning to herself:

“O Sweetbriar, growing all alone

In shady, lonesome places,

By all but sun and dew unknown,

How full you are of graces !

O Sweetbriar, with your fragrance rare

You woo me to come nigh you,

Your breath so fills the heavy air

I cannot well pass by you !

O Sweetbriar, growing by the brook

The sleek, fat cattle wade in,

Say, will you share your cozy nook

With me —a happy maiden ?

O Sweetbriar, do the dew-drops fall

And make your soft leaves glisten ?

O Sweetbriar, does the west wind call,

And do you wait and listen ?”

Lac Deschene

O PRETTY, shallow, mimic lake !
Hedged in by rushes and wild rice,
Why is it that the wind can wake
And make you angry in a trice ?
You were so peaceful and so still
Before the wind crept round the hill !

The roystering, mischievous wind
That stooped and kissed you as you lay
In sunshine steeped—all bland and kind—
Then racing, went away—away
To stir the languor of the wood,
And make its mutterings understood.

And you, O pretty, shallow lake,
Must needs get ruffled and perplexed !
He kissed and fled, now wide-awake
You are at once, and cross, and vexed ;
Lift your soft arms and let them fall—
There is no stillness now at all.

I think the pain of it is not
That it crept down to wake and kiss,
And give attentions all unsought,
I think the pain of it is this :
On your warm breast it did not stay,
It kissed, and then raced far away.

You are so jealous you must cry
And toss about in much unrest—
The rushes bend, the white gulls fly—
In this wild mood I like you best.
You were too peaceful, and too still
Before the wind crept round the hill.



Deserted

SHE stood that night with a face so set,
So filled with bitterness and despair,
Closing my eyes, I can see her yet,
Sorrowful, broken, but passing fair.
Her eyes were fixed on the sky above,
Where stars were shining so soft and clear ;
Did the ghosts of innocence and love
Steal out of the gloom and stand quite near ?
So young to quiver beneath such smart !
A fairer brow 'twould be hard to find—
The pity of it ! a broken heart,
And childhood lying so close behind.
I heard her whisper, “ ’Twas long ago
That I laughed for joy at the touch of morn,
Kneeled down and prayed in the light and glow—
Ah me ! I cry now—tempest-torn :

“ ‘ Thank God for night, and the world asleep’—
Their eyes pierce through me the long, long day—
Thank God for the darkness, soft and deep,
That folds me, and hides me quite away ! ”



My Neighbor

SAY not, *I love the Lord*, unless you find
Within you, welling up by day and night,
A love, strong, full, and deep, for humankind—
Unless you find it always a delight
To show the weary one a resting-place—
To show the doubting one Faith's shining way—
To show the erring one the door of Grace—
To show the sorrowing one where they may lay
Their broken hearts,—the heaviness—the care—
The grief, the agony too sharp to bear.

When each man is the neighbor whom we love,
According to the gracious measure of His word,
Then may we lift our eyes to heaven above,
And say with rapture sweet : *I love the Lord.*

bollybocks

SAY, did you ever go to a place
Where nobody lived you cared about,
An' jest go wanderin' up an' down,
Into all the great big stores, an' out.

An' meetin' sich heaps, an' heaps of folks,
That pass you by with never a nod,
Till you got to feelin' through an' through
Jest right down lonesome, an, 'most outlawed.

An' you tell yourself if someone said
"*Will you have this place ?*" You'd say, No thanks !
I wouldn't live here for all the world,
Give me the fields, an' the brooks an' banks.

Why the stuff that grows in your lots here
Can't touch one side of our country stuff,
You have things tended to, right up fine,
But nature is sweet, though maybe rough.

An' your blossoms aren't half so nice,
Nor your creepin' vines, nor growin' grass,
Why ! 'cause ours swim in the sun all day,
An' yours stretch their necks to see him pass.

So you try somehow to pass the time,
A-wanderin' up, and a-wanderin' down,
So sick of yourself, but sicker still
Of the folks you meet, in that old town.

Such dressy folks that don't care a snap,
Not knowin' you from Adam's off ox,
An' by an' by you lift up your eyes,
An' see such a clump of hollyhocks,

A-holdin' their own in some grand place,
With their shiny leaves spread in the sun,
Noddin' so friendly, seemin' to say
"Come in old neighbor, an' share the fun!"

There's no flower nicer it seems to me,
There's nothin' prettier grows nor blows,
Though some folks call them old-fashioned things,
A-thinkin' them homely I suppose.

But you come across them some fine day
When you're so homesick you can't get air
Enough for your lungs down through your throat,
Because of the lump that's stoppin' there.

An' say, I would'nt wonder a bit
In you felt a mist come in your eyes
At sight of the bright familiar things,—
The nicest flowers under the skies.

HOLLYHOCKS

For they set me thinkin' of a house,
That stands by itself among the trees,
With a big wide porch, an' stragglin' walk
Bordered by jest such flowers as these,
Till you hear the old familiar sounds,
The chirpin', the buzzin' soft an' low,
An' sniff the breath that comes with the wind
From the ripe, red clover down below.
Till a big warm feelin' swamps your heart,
You're not so lonesome, there on their stalks
Are friends a-plenty, smilin' at you,
The pretty old-fashioned hollyhocks.
Folks write of pansy, rose, and fern,
But if I was a poet an' could rhyme,
I wouldn't bother with common things,
I'd write of hollyhocks, every time.



The Miscreant

HE glares out from the gathering dusk
With furtive glancing eye,
A creature hunted, and at war
With every passer-by.

Such a malignant face he turns,
You feel a sudden fear,
Born of the knowledge which proclaims
An evil thing is near.

A man goes by—ah, mark that scowl—
A woman young and fair,
Evil the look he bends on her—
Then comes a gallant pair.

A laddie tall, and by his side
A baby-girl, who cries
Good night! out to the miscreant,
And laughs up in his eyes.

At strife is he with all the world,
But for a moment's space,
Something akin to tenderness
Flares up in that dark face.

Her Birthday

YOUR birthday, my girl with the tender eyes,
And the dower of youth and zest,
It is kind of heaven to give us this day,
When the world is looking its best,
When the crimson roses are all abloom
With their sisters of paler grace,
When the sun makes warm, and the dew makes glad
Each velvety beautiful face.

When the breeze which comes seems a heavy breath,—
From the lungs of the earth o'ergrown
With the fairest things, and the sweetest things
That ever was seen, or known,
When the bird has an added note of pride
In each carol of joy he sings,
*Do you know? can you guess? my pretty mate,
And the wee things under my wings!*

Your birthday, my girl with the tender eyes
And the fair young cheek and brow,
Your birthday, my girl with the smiling lips,
What things shall I wish for you now?

HER BIRTHDAY

Come close—put your two hands into my own
While I wish you a happy year,
While I wish you the best that heaven can give
To a maiden so sweet and dear.

While I wish you love with never a stint,
For the riches of love are great—
While I wish that shadows may flee your path,
And the glorious sunshine wait,
While I wish you the happiness, full and deep,
The gladness and brightness of life,
A place in your heart for the white dove of peace,
But none for the whisper of strife.

Your birthday, my girl with the tender eyes
And the shimmering braids of hair—
I say as I look through a mist of tears,
It is good to be young and fair,
It is well to lean on the Father's arm,
Love forces the words in a flood :
God bless my girl with the tender eyes !
God bless her and keep her good !



Slander

THE man who with the breath lent him by heaven
Speaks words that soil the whiteness of a life
Is but an assassin, for death is given
As surely by the tongue, as by the knife.
He does the devil's basest work—no less—
Who deals in calumnies—who throws the mire
On snowy robes whose hem he dare not press
His foul lips to. The pity of it! *Liar,*
Yet half believed, by such as deem the good
Or evil but the outcome of a mood.
O slanderer, if fierce imps meet in hell
For converse, when the long day's toil is through,
Of *you* they have this worthy thing to tell,
He does the work we are ashamed to do!

Summer Holidays

SCHOOL'S out ! they cried, two happy wights ;
School's out for such a while,
The old bell won't ding-dong to-day
And make us run a mile.
It seems too good—no lessons now
To tire us right out,
We've not a single thing to do
But run, and play, and shout.
We're going fishing in the creek
With bran new hook an' line,
We're going hunting in the woods,
O, holidays are fine !
We're going to wade out in the pond
And scare the ducks and drake,
We're going haying in the field,
And swimming in the lake.
We're going to jump, we're going to sing,
And yell, and make a noise—
'Cause holidays come from the sky
For tired-out, shut-up boys.
That mean old bell that called so loud
Each time that it was rung,
Come right straight in and hurry up !
Has just to hold its tongue.

Violet

O WRINKLED, withered little flower,
You were so pretty and so blue
The day that you were given me,
By Mariana, fair and true.
Angry and jealous had I been
That fragrant budding day in spring—
Strange, that a man should let his mind
Be vexed by some light simple thing !
She had gone walking with my friend,
A splendid fellow, with a face
As handsome as Apollo's own,
And figure full of manly grace.
And seeing that he gave to her
What seemed to me a tender gaze,
And that she was in happy mood,
My jealousy was all ablaze.
I called her traitor in my heart—
Was she not mine by every right ?
Had I not held her to my breast,
And whispered things one starlight night ?
I strode away to where the waves
Rushed on the beach with sullen roar,
She cared not for me, why should I
Think fondly of her any more ?

Yet, when she softly called my name,
My heart beat quick with love and wrath,
And through the twilight soft and dim
I saw her coming down the path.

Then love was dumb, and anger spake,
The eyes of her grew proud and shy,
I called her heartless, and coquette—
What but a jealous fool was I?

She turned to leave me, then I grew
Ashamed of all my bitter speech,
But she seemed now so far from me,
I could not hope her grace to reach.

“Wait, Mariana, wait, and say
Farewell to one you hold in scorn!”
I cried, “and give to him I pray
One of the flowers you have worn.”

O, Violet, she lifted you
Up with her slender finger tips,
Laid you for one brief moment’s space
Against the redness of her lips.

Then gave you softly to my hand—
O, Violet, so sweet and shy!
In all God’s universe there was
No happier man, I wot, than I.

My Lady of the Silver Tongue

MY Lady of the Silver Tongue,
Do you not feel a thrill of shame ?
The woman is so fair and young—
Why seek to steal away her fame ?
Nay, never mind that haughty stare,
For you and I must measure swords,
To tell you to your face I dare,
A lie lurked in your pretty words.

Did you not say awhile ago
“*I am her friend*,”—in earnest tone—
And soft that voice of yours, and low—
“*I am her friend when all is done*;
As though a friend a doubt would fling,
And evil tongues to wagging start !
I am her friend—ah, there the sting,
No friend will grieve and hurt a heart !

Your eyes are very warm and kind,
And sweet the smile upon your lips,
I read the truth—I am not blind—
False are you to your finger-tips,
And I would rather be, to-day,
The standered woman, fair and young,
Than be yourself, so proud and gay,
My Lady of the Silver Tongue !

A friend's heart holds no wronging doubt,
No envy—meaner far than hate—
With tenderness it pieces out
The small shortcomings, and the great.
So when you slander—blush for shame—
Or, to some gossip's tale attend,
I pray you take some other name,
And never say, *I am her friend.*

For loyalty is not a jest,
No sweeter word is said or sung,
Take time to learn that truth is best,
My Lady of the Silver Tongue.



Sweeping to the Sea

O RIVER, sweeping to the sea !
How clear your waters are,—
So clear they mirror faithfully
Each fleecy cloud and star.

O river, running to the sea !
How fresh the breath you fling,
As on you speed right merrily
From winds that chase and sing !

Minerva's Essay

"Men, give more frankness and less flattery,"

So read Minerva from her essay fine.

"Men, give more frankness and less flattery,"

Much emphasis she laid upon this line.

"We are no foolish children to be fed

On empty words of unearned praise, forsooth,

Too long in such poor ways have we been led,

Give us no compliment—give us the truth,

Think not a woman pines to hear you tell

How beautiful her form, how fair her face,

Think not she whispers to herself, 'Tis well !'

When you proclaim her rich in every grace.

You think to please her—Ah, sir, vain your dream,

When next such fulsome praises you may speak,

Mark well her eyes, and read their scornful gleam,

And note the angry blush, on brow and cheek.

Be fair, speak out your thoughts as they may rise,

Nor seek to hide them, since the truth is grand

All praise unmerited we do despise,

If you could read our mind, and understand.

Men, give more frankness, and less flattery,
Remember, we are neither dull, nor blind,
Men, give more frankness, and less flattery,
If you would win the trust of womankind."

Much marvelled I at dear Minerva's lay,
But thought she truly meant each earnest word,
And so neglected telling her straightway

How much her genius had my bosom stirred ;
Neglected telling her that if two wings

But grew out from her shoulders soft and white,
Fair would she be as seraph mild that sings

The songs of love in Paradise to-night,
Neglected telling her the flowers she wore

Drooped with the heat of their own jealousy,
And whispered to each other o'er and o'er :

"Ah, how much sweeter is this maid than we !"
She begged for frankness from all men—from me—

For this her wondrous eloquence was poured.
So afterwards when she did question me,

I—foolish man—confessed that I was bored.
And when she showed her gown of palest blue,

Shook for me all its dainty ruffles out,
I would not praise it—though I wanted to—

Her red lips straight took on a pretty pout.
"Did not we graduates look very nice?"

She asked, and patted one rebellious curl.

"Frankness, not flattery," I murmured twice,
 "Let me remember it my own dear girl!"
"I've seen you looking lovelier," I said,
 "I like your hair best when it softly flows,
Not piled in one big bunch upon your head—
 The powder showed quite plainly on your nose."
Who was it said, "O, inconsistency,
 Thy name is woman?" Surely he was right,
I spoke my thoughts, refrained from flattery,
 Lo, for reward comes this brief note to-night :
"I think to longer be engaged to you
 Would be a foolish thing, and very wrong.

POST-SCRIPT :

Gray says he dreamed the whole night through
 Of me, and of my essay wise and strong.
If you should call to night, at eight, pray bring
 My notes—and—and—the photo, and the curl,
I will return your presents and your ring,
 To think, that *you* should grow into a churl."
I'm going to tell Minerva when we meet
 That it was just a little joke of mine,
And nevermore—my cure is quite complete—
 Will I believe a woman's essay fine.

To the Queen

WE send thee greetings on this morn in May,
Long live the Queen, right fervently we pray!
We daughters of this country young and fair
Join all our voices, singing songs of thee,
O may the words ring clearly on the air,
And reach the island cradled in the sea.
Our Queen ! lo, at the words a thrill of pride,
Of tenderness, and trust springs into life.
Our Queen, who rules so well her kingdom wide,
Our Queen, so soft in peace, so bold in strife.
Our Queen ! the love of loyal hearts we give,
We join our voices and we proudly say,
God bless the sweetest Woman—and long live
The greatest Ruler in the world to-day !

In the Old Church

“THE fine new kirk is finished, wife—the old has
had its day,

’Tis like ourselves, a trifle worn, and out of date,
and gray.

Stained windows and a tower high—I like not
such a show,

Beside the cost is something great, and money
does not grow.

Now when they come to me for help I’m going
to tell them, plain,

That since they’ve built to please themselves
they’ll ask my help in vain.”

Then sat the woman at his side : “ ’Tis meet
God’s house should be

As good a one as we can give,” she answered
tenderly.

“And we who’ve worshipped all the years in that
old church so gray,

Should go with songs, and thankful hearts, into
the new to-day.

For think of all the precious hours we have had
over there—

The hours of penitence and tears, the hours of
peace and prayer.

I went to-day to say good-bye, and as I stood
alone,

The memory of blessings shared came to me,
one by one.

I heard the message from the Word, the sermon
good and wise,

I heard the songs of love and hope ring clearly
to the skies ;

And looking over to the pew we've worshipped
in for years,

I seemed to see so many things, to see them
through my tears.

I saw us sitting there when we were young, and
glad, and strong,

Ere we had learned that sorrow lends a sweet-
ness to life's song ;

When every golden Sabbath day found us in
love with life—

The world was fair, and God was good, and we
were man and wife.

One pretty far off summer morn my dim eyes
seemed to see,

A morn when I sat by your side, our first-born
on my knee ;

His fair head lay upon my arm, and rich was I,
and proud,

I whispered in the Master's ear things spoken
not aloud;

And then our other bonnie lads grew plain unto
my eyes,

And Belle—our lassie fair and good, our lassie
sweet and wise.

I felt again her little hand clasped tightly in my
own—

A mother holds her daughter dear, and I had
but the one.

My soft eyed one, my loving one, with braids of
yellow hair—

Ah me ! I could not help but know the little
one was fair.

In the old church I thought upon our hour of
grief and pain,

Of loneliness—*she went away and came not back
again—*

When broken-hearted 'neath the loss we bowed
beneath the rod,

There, close about us in that hour, we felt the
arm of God.

I saw us older grown and bent, each tall son in
his place,

I saw the minister who stood with heaven in his
face,

His worn old face we loved so well, his eyes that
seemed to see

The golden light that lights the shore of God's
eternity ;

And yet how simple was his heart, how kindly
was his way,

And how he cared for all his flock, nor wearied
night nor day !

If one strayed far he followed it, and won it
back to fold,

If one fell down he lifted it with tenderness
untold ;

He fell asleep his labor done—how sweet must
be the rest

Of one who made his motto this, *The Lord shall
have my best.*

Good-bye, old church ! Good-bye, I said, and left
its portals wide,

And then I turned and looked upon the new
church just beside ;

Upon its windows tall and stained the yellow
sunbeams played,

It stood, the temple of the Lord, in loveliness
arrayed.

I thought, "she said, and stroked his hand, of
one who takes his rest,

I seemed to hear his deep voice say : *The Lord
shall have my best.*"

The sun crept lower in the sky, the world lay
sweet and fair,

A bird trilled softly from its throat a song that
was a prayer.

The old man looked up at his wife, with tears his
cheeks were wet,

"Ay, there are many things," he said, "we may
not, dear, forget.

We're growing old, wife, like the day our sun
sinks in the west,

I'll say with him we both loved well, *The Lord
shall have my best.*"



September

SEPTEMBER comes across the hills
Her blue veil softly flowing,
Her flagons deep of wine she spills,
And sets the old world glowing.

Yon robin's piping her a tune—
How runs his carol tender?
"I knew you once as pretty June,
When you were young and slender.

And though you've grown a gracious thing,
Full-blossomed, grand and stately,
I still can see a hint of spring—
Your youth's but left you lately."

Spring o' the Year

"Spring o' the year! Spring o' the year!"

Was there ever a song so gay,
As the song the meadow-lark sings to me
When we meet in the fields each day?

"Spring o' the year! Spring o' the year!"

Then pauses a moment to look
At soft green leaves on shrub and tree,
And buttercups gay in the brook.

"Spring o' the year! Spring o' the year!"

No more weather gloomy and sad,
Spring o' the year! Spring o' the year!
Aren't you glad? Aren't you glad?

"Spring o' the year! Spring o' the year!"

Isn't it blue—the sky above?
Watch 'em, watch 'em, these mates of mine,
Building their nests, and making love.

"Spring o' the year! Spring o' the year!"

Ho! I sing it morning and night,
Never were meadows quite so green,
Never were posies quite so bright.

"Spring o' the year! Spring o' the year!"

Out rings his song so sweet and shrill,
Its gladness catches you unawares,
With its gurgle, and laugh, and thrill.

Mildred

MY lady Mildred tells me oft
That she is mistress now of me,
Her voice is very sweet and soft,
But, ah, an autocrat is she.

Go, say the red lips, and I go,
Come, and I hasten to her side,
Her warm smile sets my heart aglow,
Her quaintness is my joy and pride.

I used to say in phrases fine
That I was master of myself,
The proud boast is no longer mine;
I'm subject to a wilful elf.

My Mildred with the rose-leaf face,
A tyrant spirit sways your breast,
For humbly though I sue your grace,
You will not grant a moment's rest.

I've served you for a whole long year—
The woman new has come to stay—
But tell me, now, have you no fear
That I will mutiny some day.

You give yourself a lofty air,
Your throne an ill-used father's knee—
Now worry fly, slink off dull care,
I have my girl, and she has me.

My lady Mildred without doubt,
Your tender eyes are full of mirth,
And by and by, your laugh rings out,
The gladdest sound in all the earth.



The Old Valentine

I SENT my sweetheart a valentine on one St.
Valentine's day,

A long time ago, when my hair was brown, ah,
now it is sprinkled with grey !

My sweetheart was pretty as she could be, a wild
rose bloomed in each cheek,

Her auburn hair rippled down to her waist, her
eyes were tender and meek.

And, O, my sweetheart was dear to me, though
nobody could have guessed

From my careless glance, or my careless word,
the tenderness in my breast.

I sent my sweetheart a valentine, a flowery and
foolish thing,

All covered with blue forget-me-nots, and cupids
gay on the wing.

Two hearts pierced through, a ruffle of lace, a
knot of ribbon, a dove,

And, better than all, a space whereon I could
write a message of love ;
So burning the midnight oil I wrote with infinite
patience and care,
This one earnest verse (for rhyming came hard)
to send to my lady fair :

“I love you, I love you with all my heart,
And fain would I call you mine,
My Mary, my darling, my beautiful girl,
Let me be your valentine !”

This yellow old page from the book of youth
was put in my hand to-day,
As I growled, “ Our Tom has fallen in love in a
nonsensical way ;
He is making a fool of himself—ha ! ha ! he is
writing poetry now,
To his Anna’s lips, and his Anna’s hair, his
Anna’s beautiful brow.”

“Why what rubbish is this ?” I asked my wife, a
portly but sweet-faced dame,
Who smilingly showed me the verse underneath
which I had written my name ;
Shamefaced, I read it again and again—let me
confess to a truth—
I felt like disowning the yellow thing that belong-
ed to the days of youth.

THE OLD VALENTINE

Till I pictured myself an excited lad penning the
words of care,

Knowing her answer would fill my heart with
rapture or dark despair.

It was yesterday, who says we are old? "I do,"
says Mary, my wife,

"But age has nothing to do with it, since the
choosing was done for life."

I bowed my grey head over her hand, "my
sweetheart," I whispered low,

On this Valentine's day I tender you the verse
written long ago.

"I love you, I love you with all my heart,

And fain would I call you mine,

My Mary, my darling, my beautiful girl,

Let me be your Valentine."



The Boy of the House

HE was the boy of the house you know,
A jolly and rollicking lad,
He was never tired and never sick,
And nothing could make him sad.

If he started to play at sunrise,
Not a rest would he take at noon ;
No day was so long from beginning to end
But his bed-time came too soon.

Did some one urge that he make less noise,
He would say with a saucy grin,
“Why, one boy alone doesn’t make much stir—
I’m sorry I isn’t a twin !

“There’s two of twins—oh it must be fun
To go double at everything,
To holler by twos, and to run by twos,
To whistle by twos, and to sing ! ”

His laugh was something to make you glad,
So brimful was it of joy,
A conscience he had, perhaps, in his breast,
But it never troubled the boy.

You met him out in the garden path,
With the terrier at his heels,

You knew by the shout he hailed you with
How happy a youngster feels.

The maiden auntie was half distraught
At his tricks, as the day went by,
“The most mischievous child in the world !”
She said, with a shrug and a sigh.

His father owned that her words were true,
And his mother declared each day
Was putting wrinkles into her face,
And was turning her brown hair grey.

His grown-up sister referred to him
As a trouble, a trial, a grief,
“The way he ignored all rules,” she said,
“Was something beyond belief.”

But it never troubled the boy of the house,
He revelled in clatter and din,
And had only one regret in the world—
That he hadn't been born a twin.

* * * * *

There's nobody making a noise to-day,
There's nobody stamping the floor,
There's an awful silence up-stairs and down,
There's crape on the wide hall door.

The terrier's whining out in the sun—
"Where's my comrade ? " he seems to say,
Turn your plaintive eyes away, little dog,
There's no frolic for you to-day.

The freckle-faced girl from the house next door,
Is sobbing her young heart out,
Don't cry little girl, you'll soon forget
To miss the laugh and the shout.

The grown-up sister is kissing his face,
And calling him "darling " and "sweet,"
The maiden aunt is holding the shoes
That he wore on his restless feet.

How strangely quiet the little form,
With the hands on the bosom crossed !
Not a fold, not a flower out of place,
Not a short curl rumpled and tossed !

So solemn and still the big house seems—
No laughter, no racket, no din,
No startling shriek, no voice piping out,
"I'm sorry I isn't a twin ! "

There's a man and a woman pale with grief,
As the wearisome moments creep ;
Oh ! the loneliness touches everything—
The boy of the house is asleep.

For He was Scotch and so was She

THEY were a couple well-content
With what they earned and what they spent,
Cared not a whit for style's decree,
For he was Scotch, and so was she.

And O, they loved to talk of Burns ;
Dear, lithesome, tender, Bobby Burns !
They never wearied of his song,
He never sang a note too strong,
One little fault could neither see,
For he was Scotch, and so was she.

They loved to read of men who stood
And gave for country, life and blood,
Who held their faith so dear a thing
They scorned to yield it to a king ;
Ah ! proud of such they well might be—
For he was Scotch, and so was she.

From neighbor's broil they kept away—
No liking for such things had they,
And O, each had a cannie mind !
Each could be deaf, and dumb, and blind;
Of words—nor pence—were none too free—
For he was Scotch, and so was she.

I would not have you think this pair
Went on in weather always fair,
For well you know in married life
Will come, sometimes, the jar and strife;
They couldn't always just agree—
For he was Scotch, and so was she.

But near of heart they ever kept,
Until at close of life they slept,
Just this to say when all was past—
They loved each other to the last,
They're loving yet in heaven, maybe—
For he was Scotch, and so was she.



The Legend of Love

THERE'S a cup on the very topmost shelf
Of the cupboard built in the wall,
On one side a vine is traced on the delf
With forget-me-nots blue and small ;
On the other the words stand boldly up
That were once a pride and a joy,
For a legend it bears, this old-fashioned cup,
Which runs, " For a good little boy ! "

'Twas bought by a mother with eyes as blue
As forget-me-nots pretty and shy,
When youth was her portion, and love was true,
And the days went merrily by.

On the cottage floor where the sunbeams crept,
Played her own sturdy lad of three,
And but yesterday he smiled and he slept
Such a pretty babe on her knee.

He followed her down to the garden gate
On her way to the little town,
"Now hurry right back, and don't you be late,"
He said with a pout and a frown.

He must have some toys for the Christmas-tide,
So she bought him a tiny sled,
And a nice little box of sweets beside
To go into his mouth so red.

"Was there anything else !" she asked herself,
"She could buy for the laddie small ?"
It was then that she saw the cup of delf
Which stands on the shelf in the wall.

"For a good little boy," ah, that meant him,
With a face as sweet as a rose,
"He is good," she said, and her eyes grew dim,
"From his curly head to his toes."

And she carried her treasures one by one
To the cottage down in the lane,
Where the winter sunbeams brightly shone
On his face at the window pane.

He was proud of the sleigh with its jingling bells
And the box was a thing of joy,
“But the cup is best,” he said, “for it tells
That I’m such a good little boy.”

O poor little mother, your eyes so blue,
Faded out with the wash of tears !
O poor little mother, your heart so true,
It broke with the weight of years !

And there, on the very topmost shelf,
The old-fashioned cup it has stood,
Since a day long ago when she owned to herself
That her boy was no longer good.

There is dust on it now, but believe me, dear,
It was once a pride and a joy,
With its legend of love, so bright and so clear,
Which runs, “For a good little Boy.”



Our Father

TEACH us, dear Lord, all that it means to say
The words, *Our Father*, when we kneel to pray,
Our Father thou, then every child of thine
Is, by the bond, a brother, Lord, of mine.

Teach us, dear Lord, all that it means to say
Thy will be done, when we kneel down to pray—
Thy will be done—then our proud wills must break
And lose themselves in love for Thy dear sake.

Teach us, dear Lord, all that it means to say
Give us our daily bread, when thus we pray;
We will be trustful when we understand,
Nor grasp the loaf from out a brother's hand.

Teach us, dear Lord, all that it means to say,
Forgive our trespasses, when, meek, we pray;
Forgive ! the word was made in Paradise,
And this world's hope and faith within it lies.

Teach us, dear Lord, all that it means to say
The words Christ gave us, when we kneel to pray,
For when we know and live their meaning deep,
No heart will need to break, no eyes to weep.

Jack

JACK'S dead an' buried, it seems odd,

A deep hole covered up with sod
A lyin' out there on the hill,
An' Jack, as never could keep still,
A sleepin' in it. Jack could race,
And do it at a good old pace,
Could sing a song, an' laugh so hard
That I could hear him in our yard
When he was half-a-mile away.
Why not another boy could play
Like him, or run, or jump so high,
Or swim, no matter how he'd try,
An' I can't get it through my head
At all, at all, that Jack is dead.

Jack's mother didn't use to be
So awful good to him an' me,
For often when I'd go down there
On Saturday's, when it was fair,
To get him out to fish or skate,
She'd catch me hangin' round the gate,
An' look as cross as some old hen,
An' tell me, "Go off home again,

It's not the thing for boys," she'd say,
"A hangin' round the creek all day,
You go off home and do your task,
No, Jack can't go, you needn't ask,"
An' when he got in scrapes, why, she
Would up and lay it on to me,
An' wish I lived so far away
Jack couldn't see me every day.

But last night when I'd done the chores,
It seemed so queer like out of doors,
I kept a listenin' all the while
An' looking down the street a mile ;
I couldn't bear to go inside,
The house is lonesome since he died,
The robber book we read by turns
Is lyin' there—an' no boy learns
All by himself, 'cause he can't tell
How many words he'll miss or spell,
Unless there's someone lookin' on
To laugh at him when he gets done.

An' neighbor women's sure to come
A visitin' a feller's home,
An' talkin' when they look at me
'Bout how thick us two used to be—
A stealin' off from school, an' such—

An' askin' " Do I miss him much ? "
'Till I sneak off out doors, you see,
They just can't let a feller be !
Well, I walked down the road a bit,
Smith's dog came out, I throwed at it,
An' do you know it never howled
Same as it always did, or growled,
It seemed to say, " why ! Jim's alone,
Now, I wonder where's that other one ? "

Afore I knew it I was down
Way at the other end of town,
A hangin' round in the old way
For some one to come out an' play.
There wasn't no one there to look
So I slipped in to our old nook,
I found his knife hid in the grass
Where we'd been Zulus at the pass,
The can of bait, an' hook an' line,
Were lyin' with the ball of twine,
An' " Jim," I seemed to hear him say,
"The fish will suffer some to-day ! "

'Twas more than I could stand just then,
I got up to go off home, when
Someone kissed me on the cheek,
An' hugged me so I couldn't speak,

You won't believe it, like as not,
But 'twas Jack's mother, an' a lot
Of great big tears came stealin' down
Right on my face ; she didn't frown
A single bit — kept sayin' low,
“My blue eyed boy ! I loved you so ! ”
Of course I knew just right away
That she meant Jack—my eyes are grey—
But Jack, he had the bluest eyes,
Blue like you see up in the skies,
An' shine that used to come and go—
One misses eyes like his you know.
An' by-an-by she up and tried
To tell me that she'd cried an' cried,
A thinkin' of the times that she
Had scolded Jack an' scolded me,
An' other things that I won't tell
To anyone, because—O, well,
Boys can't do much, but they can hold
Tight on to secrets till they're old.
She's Jack's relation, that's why she
Feels kind of lovin' like to me,
But when she called me her own lad,
Oh, say, I felt just awful bad;
My head it went round in a whirl,
I up and cried just like a girl.

But say, if Jack did see us two
He laughed a little, don't you know,
For if I'd ever brag around
That I'd lick some one, safe an' sound,
He'd laugh an' say, "Jim, hold your jaw !
You know your're scared to death of maw."
Oh ! I'd give all this world away
If I could hear him laugh to-day,
I get so lonesome, it's so still
An' him out sleepin' on that hill;
For nothin' seems just worth the while
A-doin' up in the old style,
Cause everything we used to do
Seemed always jus' to need us two.
My throat aches till I think 'twill crack,
I don't know why—it must be Jack.

There ain't no fun, there ain't no stir,
His mother—well 'tis hard on her,
But she can knit, and sew, and such—
Oh, she can't miss him half so much !



A Pledge.

I SIT alone, to-night—to-day our two roads meet,
You helped me find the right, and I will not
forget ;

I'm pledged to do my best with lips that will
not lie,

To strive with mind and heart as all the days go
by.

You looked so strong and bold when all was
done and said—

You have a heart of gold—and I have one of
lead—

Some day I'll climb the height, if fortune fair
betide,

I only know to-night the world is strangely wide.



Blue Eyed Bess.

BUT let us argue for a space
Before we say that long good-bye,
Now heaven grant us store of grace,
We are so human, you and I.

Full well you know the old time way
Will easiest seem unto our feet,
Full well you know with yesterday
No fair to-morrow may compete.

Then some day, Bess, we will be old,
Think you our hearts content will stay
With bleak December, or, grown bold,
Will they not race back into May?

Look not upon his acres wide,
But think how weary life would be,
Your body walking at his side,
Your soul back in the spring with me.

Why will you try to cheat poor love
Who only asks you for his own,
His blindness should compassion move,
Yet what compassion have you shown?

Say, "Love, take all I have to give,
For nothing would I keep from thee,
We'll walk together while we live,
And thou shalt make the path for me."

The pretty blush is on your face,
We will not say that long good-bye,
Now heaven grant us store of grace,
We are so human, you and I.

The Courtier's Ladye

MY ladye's face is proud and fair,
My ladye's eyes are grey,
She goeth out to take the air
On every sunny day.

My ladye wears a gown of blue
That falleth to her feet,
All broidered o'er with pearls like dew,
And daisies shy and sweet.

My ladye wears a hat of silk,
That fairy hands did spin,
And strings it hath as white as milk,
To tie beneath her chin.

My ladye wears upon her breast
A knot of ribbon gay,
But who her heart doth love the best—
My ladye will not say.

And, O, the jewels rich and rare
Do make the eye grow dim,
That sparkle in her powdered hair,
And on her fingers slim.

My ladye wears a satin shoe,
With silver buckle wide,

A tiny thing from heel to toe
That is my joy and pride.

My ladye wears upon her face
A little touch of scorn,
No fuller share of pride and grace
Hath any woman born.

My ladye's face is sweet and fair,
My ladye's eyes are grey,
She goeth out to take the air
On every sunny day.



The Rustic's Lassie

MY lassie's face is fair to see,
My lassie's eyes are blue,
And always do they tell to me
Her heart is fond and true.
There's silk, too, on my lassie's head,
As yellow as the gold,
And woven is each shining thread
Into a braided fold.
But never fairy hands did spin
Silk like my lassie's hair,
As for the strings beneath her chin
I would not have them there.

Lest one dear dimple growing shy
That everyone should see,
Within those silken strings would try
To hide itself from me.

My lassie wears a gown of white,
Which needs no pearls to deck,
With lace like cobweb, soft and light,
Full-gathered at her neck.

My lassie wears upon her breast
No knot of ribbon gay,
Forget-me-nots she loves the best,
Plucked at the dawn of day.

My lassie's feet like two white mice
Go slipping through the grass,
And all the dew-drops think them nice,
And kiss them as they pass.

The satin shoe with buckle drest
Is richer, it may be,
But if the truth must be confest,
Not half so good to see.

My lassie's face is fair to see,
My lassie's eyes are blue,
And always do they tell to me
Her heart is fond and true.

Her Dower

ONE angel brought a birth-day gift,
Straight from the courts above,
“Now soft thy voice, and bright thy smile,
For I do give thee Love.”

Another came on snowy wings,
Tipped with a golden light,
“I bring the gift of Purity
To keep thy dear heart white.”

The third had music in his tones :
“I bring thee Courage, strong,
To guard both Love and Purity
From what would do them wrong.

“For tender feet must press the paths—
The crowded paths of life—
And tender souls must meet the shock
And din of passions strife.

“Walk thou unmoved through perils great,
While we thy strength applaud,
With Courage true I crown to-day
The fairest work of God.”

Mavourneen

SO still you sleep upon your bed,
So motionless and slender,
It cannot be that you are dead,
My little maiden tender.

You were no creature pale and meek
That death should hasten after,
The red rose bloomed upon your cheek,
Your lips were made for laughter.

To you the great world was a place
That care might never stay in,
A playground built by God's good grace
For happy folks to play in.

You made your footpath by life's flowers,
O happy little maiden,
The sky was full of shine and showers,
The wind was perfume-laden.

I came and found you sweet and wild,
Love—only love—could tame you,
To think, O pretty thoughtiess child
That greedy death must claim you.

Your dimpled hands are folded now
Above the snowy bosom,
The lilies creep and kiss your brow,
O tender broken blossom !

The white lids hide the eyes so clear,
So witching and beguiling,
But as my tears fall on you dear
Your lips seem softly smiling.

And do you feel that it is home,
The City we call heaven ?
Ah ! were they glad to have you come,
My little maid of seven ?

Methinks when you stand all in white
To learn each sweet new duty,
Some eye will note with keen delight
Your radiance and beauty.

And when your laughter softly rings
Out where God's streets do glisten,
The angels fair will fold their wings
And still their song to listen.



Song of the Wind.

O Wind you come singing, singing,
Gaily about the eaves,
I think you are bringing, bringing,
The secret of the leaves ;
Secrets you learned in the Maytime,
Down in the wood so cool,
Learned in the night-time and day-time,
By bank, and brook, and pool.

O wind, you go shrilling, shrilling,
Over the chimneys high,
While the clouds are softly spilling
Rain on the gardens dry :
'Tis autumn, the wild new-comer
Has taught you how to sing,
But the voice of the sweet dead summer
Through it all seems to ring.

O wind, you are railing, railing,
'Tis the voice of a shrew,
Wearied at length, and failing,
Then beginning anew :

Here you come sighing, sighing,
Down to my casement wide,
A moment and you are flying
Away in pique and pride.

I love your chasing and panting,
I love the melody,
That you go so gaily chanting
To earth, and sky, and sea.
Our birds go southward soaring,
When signs of frost appear,
You, with your sighing and roaring,
Sing to us all the year.



The Richer Man

YOU know how it is—you have had the gain,
The sweetness and pleasures of life,
I the fruitless striving, the heat to attain,
The toil, the failure, the strife.

Then we chance to come by the will of fate
To the warmth of one woman's eyes,
And fate decrees it is not too late
To give me a great surprise.

And the woman turns with matchless grace
The bloom of her tender cheek,
And her red lips smiling—her glorious face,
Her glance so loving and meek.

To me—to the penniless bankrupt one,
And I find my portion at last,
And heaven as real, when all is done,
As the hell of the bitter past.

The glories of earth are but chaff in the wind,
The riches of earth but a song,
Now listen, my brother, I think you will find
You have tried to do me a wrong.

You had all that to me had been denied,
I starved while you feasted well,
You have fame, and a hundred things beside,
You have watched your coffers swell.

Yet when we come by the will of fate
To the warmth of one woman's eyes,
And fate declares it is not too late
To give me a great surprise.

You come with the weight of your yellow gold,
And the trappings of your success ;
You come with your bearing, courtly and bold,
You woo in your haughtiness.

You try to dazzle her eyes of blue,
And you try to steal for yourself
The heart of a woman good and true,
Go, be content with your pelf.

Learn there are treasures you may not grasp,
Joys you must surely miss,
The hand you court lies in my clasp
The lips are my own to kiss.

A penniless fellow ! you used to say—
Own to the truth if you can—
We stand here together this summer's day,
And *I* am the *richer* man.

His Wife and Boy.

LOVE is a myth which men create from vapors
of the heart and brain,

Thus far the poet grave did get, then from a
smile could not refrain,

Someone was singing, he could hear

Each word so low and sweet and clear,

“By Baby Bunting!

Papa's gone a-hunting,

To get a little rabbit skin

To wrap the Baby-Bunting in.”

Right well he knew that picture fair

Might set a stoic's heart aglow,

For it was such a bonnie pair,

So gently rocking to and fro.

The old song was a foolish thing,

Yet it seemed good to hear her sing,

“By Baby-Bunting!

Papa's gone a-hunting,

To get a little rabbit-skin

To wrap his Baby-Bunting in.”

The sunshine would be creeping down

Upon her hair of golden brown,

And farther yet that it might peep
At her awake, at him asleep,
And both were his to have and hold,
How runs the foolish song so old?

“ By Baby-Bunting !
Papa's gone a-hunting
To get a little rabbit-skin
To wrap the Baby-Bunting in.”

But he must to his hunting go,
A cloak this pen of his must win
As soft as silk and white as snow,
To wrap the Baby-Bunting in.
Strange that his poem deep and strong
Should wait upon a nursery song,

“ By Baby-Bunting !
Papa's gone a hunting,
To get a little rabbit skin
To wrap the Baby-Bunting in.”

Love is a myth that men create
From vapors of the heart and brain,
O pen, I fear you lied of late !
Hark, softly rings the old refrain !

“ By Baby-Bunting !
Papa's gone a-hunting,
To get a little rabbit-skin
To wrap the Baby-Bunting in.”

She Just Keeps House For Me

SHE is so winsome and so wise

She sways us at her will,

And oft the question will arise

What mission does she fill ?

And so I say with pride untold

And love beyond degree,

This woman with the heart of gold

She just keeps house for me—

For me,

She just keeps house for me.

A full content dwells in her face,

She's quite in love with life,

And for a title, wears with grace

The sweet old-fashioned " Wife,"

And so I say with pride untold,

And love beyond degree,

This woman with the heart of gold

She just keeps house for me—

For me,

She just keeps house for me.

What though I toil from morn till night,
What though I weary grow,
A spring of love and dear delight
Doth ever softly flow,
And so I say with pride untold,
And love beyond degree,
The woman with the heart of gold
She just keeps house for me.

Our children climb upon her knee
And lie upon her breast,
And ah ! her mission seems to me
The highest and the best,
And so I say with pride untold,
And love beyond degree,
This woman with the heart of gold
She just keeps house for me.



Love's Humility

“I LOVE her, yes,” the younger of them said,
 “I think her beautiful beyond compare;
How proudly does she carry that small head,
 With all its wealth of silky night-black hair?
And then her warm red mouth—I see it now—
 Was it not made for kisses? And her chin
So round and firm—the smooth unwrinkled brow,
 Each cheek with such a cunning dimple in.
She is so piquant, winsome, fair, and good,
 I could not choose but love her if I would.

“Did I not love her well, think you her charms
 Would move my pulse in this delicious way,
And make me long to fold her in my arms,
 Hold her love’s prisoner by night and day?
'Tis joy to think of her white-lidded eyes—
 So full of dreams, so full of tender speech—
Her slender form—and yet, it were not wise
 To be too rash—come, let your wisdom teach.
She is so piquant, winsome, fair, and good,
 I could not choose but love her if I would.

“I fain would make her all my own, this maid,
I love her well, but would it be quite right
To risk so much? At times I grow afraid
To lift her up to such a dizzy height.
You know my prospects and you know my pride,
(It is a weighty matter to be wed)
And yet, I only know when at her side
That life is rich in joy and bliss,” we said.

“She is so piquant, winsome, fair, and good,
I could not choose but love her if I would.”

“I could not choose but love her if I would”
You boast, but if you loved her you would say,
“I would not choose but love her if I could,”
So answered him the old man, stern and gray.

“There’s passion in your words, but you have fears,
Your high position! Ah! you are afraid!
Boy, learn this truth from one of sober years,
The man who really, truly, loves a maid
Knows only two things well—no more, no less—
Her matchless worth—his own unworthiness.”



Our Host and His House

NAY, rail not, dear, at Time in such rude way,
 'Tis scarcely fair, since he has been our host
For such a while. And rail not at the world,
This grey old ivy-covered manor-house wherein
He long has entertained us both. Since we
Have broken bread with him, danced in his
 halls,
Let us not talk of him in slighting way.

What though
He has not given lavishly,
For daily use, the rich things in his store ?
Rare things grow common, quite, when they are
 used
In common way—you know this for yourself—
And delicacies lose their flavor when
The palate tires of them.
But ah, on state
Occasions has he not been prodigal ?
O wine of life that he has poured for us !
Poured freely till it ran the goblet o'er,
And trickled down in little rosy streams !
Believe me, dear, for all his length of beard
So snowy white, his venerable air,

Enough of youth lurks in his bosom still
To make him lenient with foolishness.
For often has he stolen off and left
Us standing heart to heart,
And has he not
Sometimes, stilled all his house lest we should
wake
Too soon from some wrapt dream of tender-
ness?
Then, too, for playthings he has given us hours
Filled full enough of rapture unalloyed
To cover every day of all the years
With common happiness if properly
Spread out.

As for this grey old world,
It is not half so murk, so wanting in
All light, all glow, and warmth, as some declare—
As we oft picture to ourselves, my dear,
It has its windows looking east and west,
It has its sunset and its morning gold;
The trouble is we *will* look toward the east
At eventide, and toward the sombre west
When heaven is shaking down upon the world,
A lusty infant day. And so we miss
The glory of the sunset and the dawn.

The Mother's Story

SHE told a wonderful story, the mother so fair
and good,

Of the deep and strange old mystery men have
never understood.

It was such a pretty story I wove it into a rhyme
To read to myself, when the skies were grey, at
the end of summertime.

“Now listen,” she said, “my children, to every
word that I say,

Dear Marjory, share the hearthrug with your
restless sister May,

And you, my lad, with the great dark eyes, may
share the couch with me,

While the baby-girl, with doll in arms, shall sit
upon mother's knee.

Your faces change as I carry your thoughts
through the ebb and flow

Of someone's joys, and someone's hopes, and I
love to watch the glow
In Marjory's eyes as we talk of elves in their
wild and wanton glee,
When they make the dim old forest ring with
the sound of revelry.

But May cares only to listen when I tell some
quaint home tale,
She likes a cot on a wooded hill, and flocks of
sheep in the vale,
While you, my lad, with the dreamy eyes, you
love the prose and the rhyme,
The deeds of daring, the deeds of might, of good
King Arthur's time.

To-day May asked me a question, and I've pondered
it for hours,
*God's acre, she said, is full of bloom—do the
dead folks turn to flowers?*
There's a tender story, my children, that may
comfort you some day
When mother sleeps in God's acre, and the
flowers blossom gay.

The soft-voiced angels of Life and Love they
whispered to Christ one day

We pray Thee that when one fair and good in
the earth is laid away,
That we in the golden dawn may go alone
where the sleeper lies,
And sing in the solemn silence the songs learned
in Paradise."

Answered Christ, "Go sing till comes springing
up, up from the sod beneath,
The lily, white as a ransomed soul, the rose with
its fragrant breath."

A silence fell on the little group, there were tears
in Marjory's eyes,

It was a wonderful story, and mother was O, so
wise !

Then the wee girl clapped her dimpled hands,
and said in her loving way,
"When you turn to a posy, mamma, I'll water you
every day."

It was such a pretty story I wove it into a rhyme,
To read to myself, when the skies were grey, at
the end of summertime.



In Lovers' Lane

O, RANTING bully with clamorous breath,
O, vandal, why come you down from the
North

With frost in your breath, and wrath in your voice,
And force in your arms to level and toss?
You rush through the wood and threaten the
trees—

The giants of oak, of beech, and of elm,
Playmates of yours ere age had o'ertaken,
Stolen their vigor, their sap, and their life.
The tender child-trees, the slender child-trees
You worry, you beat, you fling to the earth,
Lithe and supple are they to defy you,
Swiftly they spring up as soon as you pass,
Trembling a little with fear and anger,
But whole and unhurt—the slender young things!

Is it not enough that you bend and you break,
And make you a path wherever you go,
But you must enter this quiet old lane,
Shut out from the world by lattice of vines,
Where Eve, pretty Eve, so prim and demure

Is walking with someone, taking the air ?
You rest behind them plotting new mischief,
Rest till a soft hush falls down on the world,
Rest till the growing things listen and laugh
Thinking you gone to your lair in the North,
Then you begin to stir and to mutter,
Growing in anger, till, big with your wrath,
On you come rushing—vandal how can you
Liberties take with a maiden so fair ?

Eve, as you walk so primly beside him,
Keeping your distance, nor heeding his sighs.
Chin tilted forward, eyes straight before you,
Parasol swinging in one little hand,
Blue gown all flounces, ribbons a-flutter,
Dainty, and winsome, and proud as a queen !

There is no time—the boorish thing takes you—
You and your ruffles, your ribbons and curls,
You and your primness, your blushes, and airs,
Straight to the arms of the man at your side.
You have no conscience swaggering north wind,
Else would you hasten and leave them alone;
Why must you push her yet nearer to him ?
Buffet and beat her—you ruffian strong !
She has to hide her face on his bosom,
While you go whirling in ecstasy round,

Then you loosen her bronze hair and fling it,
Warm and electric, up over his cheek,
Hair soft and shiny, full of allurements,
Tempting a mortal to feel of its gold.

Down you go soberly over the fields,
Making believe you have left them for good,
Driving the cattle and scaring the flocks,
Shaking the cedars that stand on the hill;
Then, when she loosens herself from his grasp,
Laughing and blushing, and red as a rose,
Back you come flying on mischief intent
Pleased to torment the fair maid in the lane.

Oh, how you buffet her, boor that you are !
Oh, how you flutter her garments abroad !
Clutch at her flounces, so pretty and neat !
Worry the ribbons that hang at her waist !
Then growing fiercer, you roar and you rage,
Whirling and twirling to show off your strength,
Pay no attention to prayer—or mishap—
Drive her to shelter again in his arms.
Watching so closely the glances she gives,
Wondering greatly how much she regrets,
All that has happened, since, prim and demure,
Out from the farmhouse she started at noon.

"Maidens are queer things," you laugh to yourself,

“Hiding their faces and owning to naught ;

Why must she whimper ?

She's glad to be there,

Glad to be holding so closely to him,

Glad to feel round her his care-taking arms,

Glad to be list'ning to all that he tells,

Glad that I rumbled her shiny bronze hair,

Making her fairer in somebody's eyes;

Glad that I thrashed out her primness and pride,

Glad ! she'll not own it—mark her distress now—

Oh ! but these maidens are curious things ! ”

Listen, old North Wind, listen and peer,

You have no manners, no conscience, no shame,

Words of the lovers you greedily seize—

Seize, and go shrieking them out to the world !

She is an angel! so fair, and so tender!

Too good for mortal—the loveliest, best!

O, you prying, inquisitive meddler !

One thing you miss though—the sweetest of all—

Not even a breath of love's first warm kiss

Is wasted on you—O boor of the North !

❶ Last Days of the Year

“O LAST days of the year !” she whispered low,
“You fly too swiftly past. Ah, you might
 stay
Awhile, a little while, do you not know
 What tender things you bear with you away ?
I’m thinking, sitting in the soft gloom here,
 Of all the riches that were mine the day
There crept down on the world the soft new
 year,
 A rosy thing with promise filled—and gay.
But twelve short months ago ! a little space
 In which to lose so much—a whole life’s
 wealth
Of love and faith, youth, and youth’s tender
 grace—
 Things that are wont to go from us by stealth.
Laughter and blushes, and the rapture strong,
 The clasp of clinging hands, the burning kiss,
The joy of living, and the glorious song
 That drew its sweetness from a full heart’s bliss.

O gladness great !

O wealth of tenderness !

That were my own one little year ago,

A bankrupt I—gone faith, gone warm caress,

Gone love, gone youth, gone *all*,”

She whispered low.

“O last days of the year !

You take away

The riches that I held so close and dear,

Go not so swiftly, stay a little—stay

With one poor bankrupt,

Last days of the year !”



Back on the Farm

I'LL tell you what I wish I was,

When days like these arrive,

An' spring puts all her gewgaws on,

An' all the world's alive.

I wish I was a boy again—

A boy back on the farm—

A-watchin' all the growin' stuff,

An' cowslips gettin' warm.

A playin' round the whole long day
As happy as a lark,
An' never out of mischief once
From daylight until dark.

With such a lot of things to hear
An' such a lot to see,
An' my dog Rover at my heels,
To keep me company.

A watchin' the big sun go down
Behind the tree-tops high,
An' wishin' I could climb the one
That reached up to the sky.

A-listenin' to the katydids
A-jawin' in the lane,
An' sniffin' up the earthy smell
That comes before a rain.

Laughin' to see the white-wool'd sheep
Come skippin' down the hill,
An' feelin' such a heap of joy
I couldn't quite keep still.

An' by-an'-by, a dozin' off,
An' wakin' up to hear
My mother say : "Come in the house,
'Tis past your bedtime, dear."

A longin' takes me on these days
When all the world gets warm,
A-longin' just to be a boy—
A boy back on the farm.



He Meditates on the Critic

“CRITICISM is a tonic,
Very healthy in effect,”
Wrote he, and my verse Byronic
Did most *ruthlessly* reject.
He’s a villain—deep—politic—
Bitter things these tonics, all,
Manufactured by the critic
From his mighty store of gall.

Jacynth

“WE have been something more than friends,
Jacynth,

You know that well, yet now you say ‘my friend,
I give you welcome home,’ in such cold way
I scarce believe it is Jacynth who speaks—
Jacynth, who used to give—but let it pass.
The new year finds me with a heavy heart,
I come to seek the girl

I used to know,
The happy, trusting, tender girl, and lo—
I find her grown into a woman proud,
With richer dower of beauty for her own,
But far less lovable than my Jacynth.”

Jacynth :

“We both are changed, I think.”

Derwent :

“It is not so.

I am not of the sort that gets new friends
Like fashions for each season as it comes.”

Jacynth :

“Hark to the bells ! a happy year, Derwent ;
Give me your hand and wish as much for me.”

Derwent :

“You wish me happiness, and yet deny
My heart the highway to it.”

Jacynth :

“Happiness !

I would that words might win the illusive
Thing to carry with thee alway. How I
Would wheedle ! She cannot suit her step
To ours for long, she wearieeth of our slow
And sober pace and flitteth where she will—
Now near, now far away. We search in vain,
And when we go with down-bent head and eyes
Tear-filled, lo ! on a sudden shineth round
Our feet her rainbow hues, and to our breast
She creepeth down with eager willingness.”

Derwent :

“There’s sweetness in thy words, such sweetness as
Wells up from fragrant things tho’ they be dead,
A violet’s breath lives longer than its bloom,
So in this tender wish of thine I read
Once on a time thy love was mine.”

Jacynth :

“And Peace—

Sweet Peace, whose softest note can drown the
cry

Of bitterness—Oh ! I would have her keep
Thy company, go with thee all the day,
Sleep on thine heart from dusk till rosy dawn,
And all such pretty joys be borne to thee
As come with fragrant breath, and dewy lips,
And subtle tender touch, to keep our love
Towards God and man a warm and living thing.
A Happy Year !

A Happy, Happy Year ! ”

Derwent :

“Nay, from the velvet heart of flower in bloom
Comes this last wave of sweetness ;

My Jacynth,

Love is not dead in that white breast of thine,
O glad bells ! ring ye out to all the world,
A Happy Year !

A Happy, Happy Year ! ”



Her First Sleigh-ride

ALL night the snowflakes sought the earth—the
snowflakes big and white—

They covered up the meadows brown, they bent
the bushes slight !

At morn the sun with wondrous pomp came
climbing o'er the hill,

And lent a thousand beauties to the world so
fair and still.

Ruth at the old manse window stood, a wonder
in her gaze,

“The earth was turned to fairyland ” she cried
out in amaze !

Her cousin Ronald laughed and said, “This is
no fairyland,

But a Canadian landscape clothed in beauty
wild and grand.”

“In Georgia you have naught like this—ice, snow
and wintery gale—

The southern air is warm and soft, the southern
girls are pale,”

Not pale the face she turned to him, in each
soft cheek the red

Flamed up, “ You need not say a word against
the south,” she said,

“I envy not your rosy maids their color, or their
land,

I love the warmth of our blue sky, the bloom on
every hand,

Far more than all your snow-capped hills, and
forests ghostly white,

And mournful winds that love to play a dirge
both day and night !”

Thereat his father—kindly soul as ever put to
sleep

Both saint and sinner in the pew, with sermon
long and deep—

Bade him not tease a sister so, “Come, make
your peace straightway,

Then harness and bring out Black Bess, for on
this glorious day

My Ruth shall have a rare, good treat—a sleigh-
ride, do you hear ?

The air will warm up towards noon, for see the
sky is clear,

Come, you should love each other well, so near
of kin are you,

My child, in Ronald you shall have a brother
good and true.”

“No brother I,” the graceless youth did hastily
exclaim,

HER FIRST SLEIGH-RIDE

And Ruth, affronted, bade him wait until she
made such claim,
Black Bess came prancing from her stall, so
smooth, so shiny-skinned,
Give her the rein and she would race as swiftly
as the wind,
She tossed her slender head and pawed the
snow-drifts as she stood,
And shook her bells until they chimed, so eager
was her mood,
“Whoa, Bess, be patient for awhile?” said Ron-
ald, as with care
He tucked the robes so thick and warm about
his cousin fair.
Then off they sped away—away, the snow-birds
flew afraid,
The frost came in the air to touch the cheeks
of man and maid,
The yellow sunbeams raced with them, and made
a glow and gleam,
Put rainbow colors on the bridge that spanned
the frozen stream.
A white highway they followed down into the
valley wide,
And whiter yet the sun-kissed hills that rose on
either side;

Black Bess made all her chiming bells flow music
clear and sweet
As on she sped, and on, and on—a handsome
thing and fleet.
But when the forest wide was reached she took
a sober pace,
As though to give them time to note the beauty
of the place,
The giant heads were crowned with snow, the
giant limbs were dressed,
And close about the giant girths the snowy drifts
were pressed.
And Ruth, a fair and radiant Ruth, said softly
“This is grand ;
Old winter makes his home I trow, in this wide
northern land,
You lacked in courtesy to-day, but this ride
makes amends,
So Ronald now, a truce, I say ; let us be loyal
friends.”
“No friend am I,” he said, and laughed to note
her look of pride !
“What boors you are, here in the north !” the
angry maiden cried ;
“And now for home and supper warm, we’ll need
them without doubt.”

Homeward they flew, Black Bess as fresh as
when she started out ;

The sun with all his gorgeous train went down
behind the crest

Of one tall hill, but left a glow of crimson in the
west,

So soft, so pure, the old world lay as the young
night came down,

For covered all her gardens sere, her meadows
bare and brown.

He spoke at length, "I will not be your brother
or your friend."

But I will be your lover true till life and love
shall end,"

The blue eyes looked into the brown, he bent his
head full low,

He may have kissed her tender mouth—but this
no one can know.

* * * * *

"Ho ! Ho ! this winter air is fine !" the old man
cried with glee !

"Did you enjoy my treat ? Your cheeks are rosy
as can be,"

"I did," Ruth owned, and stretched her hands out
to the cheerful blaze,

"I like Canadian scenery—I—like—Canadian—
ways."

His Own Little Black-Eyed Lad

IT is time for bed, so the nurse declares,
But I slip off to the nook,
The cosy nook at the head of the stairs,
Where daddy's reading his book.
"I want to sit here awhile on your knee,"
I say as I toast my feet,
"And I want you to pop some corn for me,
And give me an apple sweet."
I tickle him under the chin—just so—
And I say, "Please can't I, dad?"
Then I kiss his mouth so he can't say no,
To his own little black-eyed lad.
"You can't have a pony this year at all,"
Says my stingy uncle Joe
After promising it, and there's the stall
Fixed ready for it, you know.
One can't depend on his uncles, I see,
It's daddies that are the best,
And I find mine and climb on his knee
As he takes his smoke and rest.
I tickle him under the chin—just so—
And I say, "Please can't I, dad?"
Then I kiss his mouth so he can't say no,
To his own little black-eyed lad.

I want to skate, and oh, what a fuss
For fear I'll break through the ice !
This woman that keeps our house for us
She isn't what I call nice.

She wants a boy to be just like a girl,
To play in the house all day,
Keep his face all clean, and his hair in curl,
But dad doesn't think that way.

I tickle him under the chin—just so—
And I say, " Please can't I, dad ? "
Then I kiss his mouth so he can't say no,
To his own little black-eyed lad.

"You're growing so big " says my dad to me,
"Soon be a man, I suppose,
Too big to climb up on your old dad's knee
And toast your ten little toes."
Then his voice it gets the funniest shake,
And oh, but he hugs me tight !
I say, when I can't keep my eyes awake,
"Let me sleep with you to-night."

I tickle him under the chin—just so—
And I say, " Please can't I, dad ? "
Then I kiss his mouth so he can't say no,
To his own little black-eyed lad.

Be Good and Glad

WHY do you sigh as days go by,
And carry such a weight of sadness ?
To wistful eyes, the hot tears rise—
Yet life holds store of joy and gladness.
The sunbeams gay are out to-day,
Then worry not about to-morrow,
Nor shrink, nor start with beating heart,
Nor grave fears for the future borrow.
Let us not weep when shadows deep
About our pathway seem to gather,
But go our way, without dismay,
For children we—the Lord our Father.
I hold there must be faith and trust—
For others' sins a full forgiving—
The greeting glad for sick and sad,
If we would taste the joys of living.
The sunlight streams, the old world dreams,
And by-and-by the stars will glimmer,
The lamps that swung when earth was young
Yet have not older grown, or dimmer.
And blind we are, or we would see
This lesson in the skies above us ;
That all the way, by night or day,
God watchful is, since He doth love us.

The Making Up

WE quarrel and make up again,
And then some day,

We quarrel, and forget, straightway,
The making up.

The first harsh word comes tremblingly—
We shame to fling
It forth—Ah me ! 'twill wound and sting
What we hold dear.

Ashamed and penitent we cry
“Forgive !” and kiss ;
There is a wealth of joy and bliss
In making up.

The next harsh word comes easier,
Till by-and-by,
We think it foolishness to cry
For peace again.

The discord swells in every line,
And soon we grow
So used to it we hardly know
The once sweet air.

We quarrel and make up again
And then some day
We quarrel and forget, straightway,
The making up.

⊙ Radiant Stream

RIVER ST. LAWRENCE, tranquil and fair,
Soft in the sunlight, blue as the sky,
Crowned with a beauty, tender and rare,
And kissed by the breeze that goes hurrying by.
Warm dost thou look, and fair as a dream,
Speeding so merrily out to the sea,
So strong and so gentle—O radiant stream,
The smile of the summer is resting on thee !

River St. Lawrence, tranquil and fair,
Winding thy way for a thousand long miles
Past meadow and homestead, past rocks grim
and bare,
With a song for the shore, a kiss for the isles
Lovingly cradled on thy broad breast—
Isles without number, and fair as can be,
O, sweet, shining river—bonniest, best—
The smile of the summer is resting on thee !
River St. Lawrence, tranquil and fair,
Lightly bearing the great ships along—
Boats with their white sails spread out in the
air—

O RADIANT STREAM

The broad rafts of timber, so clumsy and
strong—

The slender canoe, as swift as a bird,

The Indian builds with bark from a tree—

Thou bearest them all, unwearied, unstirred—

The smile of the summer is resting on thee !

River St. Lawrence, tranquil and fair,

Pure are thy waters that bask in the light ;

Thy ripples of laughter ring sweet on the air—

The rocks bend to listen by day and by night.

The turbulent streams rushing down from the
hills

To mingle and race with thee out to the sea,

Steal not from thy azure—O, beauty that thrills,

The smile of the summer is resting on thee !

River St. Lawrence, tranquil and fair,

Onward thou speedest, so deep and so wide ;

The sunbeams that lurk on thy bosom, see there

A tremulous tumult of love, and of pride—

Of love and of pride for the place of thy birth—

Thy far-away mother—the fresh-water sea—

From whence thou didst spring forth to gladden

God's earth—

The smile of the summer is resting on thee !

O RADIANT STREAM

River St. Lawrence, tranquil and fair,
Soft in the sunlight, blue as the sky,
Crowned with a beauty tender and rare,
And kissed by each breeze that goes hurrying
by ;
Warm dost thou look, and fair as a dream,
Speeding so merrily out to the sea,
So mighty, so gentle—O, radiant stream,
The smile of the summer is resting on thee !



My Sweetbriar Maid

I CALLED her sweetbriar when first we walked,
Deep down in the winding lane,
The wild birds sang, and we laughed, and we
talked,
Deep down in the winding lane,
We met in the sunshine of one spring day—
Youthful, and happy, and free,
Into her keeping my heart flew straightway,
Pretty and piquant, was she.

Her hazel eyes were so gentle and meek,
But scornful her mouth and chin,
Her brow was severe, but each rosy cheek
Had a roguish dimple in,
And I cried, "I love you my sweetbriar maid!"
And then, oh moment of bliss,
My lips to her cherry-red lips I laid,
And tasted my first love-kiss.

'Twas ever and ever so long ago,
But I remember it yet,
Ah, the springtime of life, its bloom and its glow,
The heart can never forget,

My sweetbriar maid I would give to-day,
The wealth, the fame and the gold
That the years have brought, if they'd roll away,
And leave us the thrill of old.

If only straight backward old time would move—
(Ah, wishing is all in vain),
And leave us with youth, and joy, and love,
Deep down in that winding lane.



My Canada

MY CANADA!

I would that I thy child might frame
A song half worthy of thy name,
Proudly I say—

This is our country, strong, and broad and
grand,

This is our Canada, our native land!

My Canada!

'Tis meet that all the world should know
How far thy sweeping rivers flow,
How fair to-day

Thy bonnie lakes upon thy bosom lie,
Their faces laughing upward to the sky.

My Canada !

We look alway with love and pride
Upon thy forests deep and wide,
And gladly say.

“These giant fellows, mighty grown with age,
Are part and parcel of our heritage.”

My Canada !

So rich in glow and bracing air,
With meadows stretching everywhere,
With gardens gay,
With smiling orchards, sending forth to greet
Full breaths of perfume from their burdens
sweet.

My Canada !

Thou art not old, thou art not skilled,
But through the ages youth hath thrilled ;
'Tis dawn with thee,
Thou has a glorious promise, and thy powers
Are measured only by the golden hours.

My Canada !

What thou art now we know full well,
What thou wilt grow to be ? Ah ! who can tell ?
We see to-day
Thy lithe form running swiftly in the race,
For all the things which older lands do grace.

My Canada !

With loyal sons to take thy part,

To hold thee shrined within the heart,

Proudly we say,

“This is our country, strong, and broad, and
grand,

“God guard thee Canada, our native land !



Perfect Peace

Because He Trusteth in Thee—ISAIAH.

I N an hour when all was anguish, when loss and
death were near,

I sought the Christ and cried aloud for aid,

Through the heavy mist of sorrow, His voice
came, sweet and clear

Take the promise, let thy mind on Me be
stayed.

For ye shall have perfect peace,

And the grieving shall depart,

And the striving and the bitterness shall
cease,

Then laid the wounded hand of Him
Upon my breaking heart,
Lo, 'twas mine, the priceless gift of
Perfect Peace.

Come let us weigh the tenderness Christ hath
for you and me,

By the promises He ready stands to prove,
Let us try to comprehend it, the gift so full and
free,

O the height and depth, and length and
breadth, of Love !

He is so patient with us as He guides our stub-
born feet—

So patient though we wander far astray,
Lean on the Everlasting Strength, He saith in
accents sweet,

As we falter and we stumble by the way.

For ye shall have perfect peace,
And the grieving shall depart,
And the striving and the bitterness shall
cease,

Then laid the wounded hand of Him
Upon my breaking heart,
Lo, 'twas mine, the priceless gift of
Perfect Peace.

Blessed Christ, if we could bring Thee the years
so swiftly gone,

O the wasted hours ! the swiftly coming night !
The finding in the twilight what we might have
found at dawn—

Thee—the source of strength, and joy, and all
delight !

I can thank Thee now for taking what I held
dear away,

For my mind on Thee, and Thee alone, is
stayed,

Thou wilt give back my treasures in the coming
golden day,

I will trust Thee and I will not be afraid.

For I shall have perfect peace,

And the grieving shall depart,

And the striving and the bitterness shall
cease,

Then laid the wounded hand of Him
Upon my breaking heart,

Lo, 'twas mine the priceless gift of
Perfect Peace.

The King's Gift

THE angels open the windows wide
In the world so far above us,
Lo, all about us, on every side,
Falls the newborn year unstained, untried,
O, angel hearts that love us !

Ye take our yesterdays dim and old,
Touched with sorrow and sinning,
And ye give to us with a grace untold
The year's soft dew and the dawn of gold,
Ye give us the fresh beginning.

Unstained the new year falls at our feet
From the world so far above us,
And what it will bring of joy complete,
Or take of treasures tender and sweet,
Ye know, O hearts that love us !



I Love Her Well

I LOVE her well, day after day
I tell the old words over,
They ring no change from grave to gay,
It is enough, I love her !

I love her well—nay never ask
The reason *why* I do so,
Ask flowers that in the sunshine bask
The reason why they grew so.

They'll tell you heaven saw the need,
And so, on earth's brown bosom
The angels scattered out the seed,
The sunbeams kissed to blossom.

I love her well, day after day
I tell the old words over,
They ring no change from grave to gay,
It is enough—I love her !



Good-Night

I AM not brave enough to sing
The requiem of a hope just dead,
That word *good-bye* will surely bring
The shadow upon swifter wing,
Come, let us say good-night instead.

See, where upon the water's crest
The sky comes down, a samite pall,
To our poor vision, dim at best—
That curtain of rare amethyst
Marks the sure ending of it all.

Ah, heart, the lesson you forget,
This wind which goes with hurrying sweep
Sees farther on, and farther yet—
The white ships go, the waters fret,
The tender stars their vigils keep.

So not good-bye, good-night—that's all,
The loneliness, the loss is mine,
To-morrow when the glad winds call,
The folds of mist will backward fall,
And leave me with my hand in thine.



Her Gold

“I COVET her gold, sir,” no farther I got,
His wrath down upon me so swiftly descended,
A gay fortune-hunter, a spendthrift, a sot,
Were names I was called before he had ended.

“You covet her gold ! Ah ! no man with a heart
Would do such a thing—not even a pauper—
With you on life’s journey my child shall not start
If counsel of mine, and warning, can stop her.”

“I covet her gold, and, believe me,” I said,
“The honest fact will in no way surprise her,
I covet her gold, sir, *the gold on her head*,
Once it is mine you may call me a miser.”



Good=Bye To Work

GOOD-BYE to work, I say, and straight
The pain of having such to say
Puts coward touches on my face,
And leaves me strangely old and gray.

Why not ? We deem it not amiss
Beside the coffin and the pall
To let our loss fill all our thought,
To let our tears like raindrops fall.

And when I stand and voice to-day
The thought of my reluctant heart,
Unclasp your bands and go your way
O work, 'tis time for us to part !

I say good-bye to more than friend,
A comrade staunch, and tried and true,
Who linked his fate with that of mine,
And paced with me the dull year through.

To work, the one enduring thing
Born of my vast desire for good,
And nourished by each grand resolve
That swept my being like a flood.

To work, the gracious thing, and strong,
That found the welcome of a bride
When life was in its green, glad spring,
The coming years outstretching wide.

When, not as laggard to his task,
But as a lover warm and true,
I held it close in my embrace,
And felt its greatness thrill me through.

O work ! if time had passed us by
And left us youth, and youth's desires,
What heights—nay never soul of man
Mounts up so high as it aspires.

The years—harsh things that steal the dew
From all that's fair—disdained to show
Such mercy towards our purpose strong,
To learn untouched its tender glow.

Not always kind, not often fair,
 Since hearts so rarely constant prove
What wonder that my fervor passed,
 That dulled grew the sharp edge of love ?

When eyes entreating met my own,
 Between would come your changeless face,
Till, thwarted, I would feel to cry,
 O work, release me for a space !

But what man putting the last kiss
 On lips once loved recalls to mind
One slight defect, the haughty look
 The thoughtless word, the act unkind.

But lets the mem'ry of each grace,
 Each sweetness, each light tender trick
Throng to his heart, feel at its strings,
 Until the tears fall hot and thick.

So work, I find since you and I
 May walk together nevermore,
I hold you dear enough to wish
 That we might live the dead years o'er.

Good-bye my work ! and straight the pain
 Of having such a thing to say,
Prints coward touches on my face,
 And leaves me strangely old and gray.

Somebody

SHE is plain of face, she hath little grace,
They say when they speak of me,
'Tis little I care, I am more than fair
In the eyes of *somebody*.

She is cold, they say, as a winter's day,
It mattereth not to me,
For the glow and heat of my true heart's beat
Is known unto *somebody*.

She holdeth in hand neither gold or land—
Ah, the dull eyes cannot see
How rich and great is my broad estate
In the heart of *somebody*.

My Little Maid

?
MY little maid, my little maid,
You grow too old, I am afraid,
Your birthday, is it? Tell me dear,
How long ago did you come here?
What? five to-day—how tall you grow!
I wish time would not hurry so,
I wish he'd just go on his way,
Nor call on us for many a-day.

Stay in the baby-world so new,
Its flowers are drowning in the dew,
Its paths are soft to tender feet,
Stay in the baby-world my sweet!

My little maid, my little maid,
You grow too old, I am afraid,
The questions trembling on your tongue
Tell me you are no longer young,
How many hours are in the year?
How high up is the heaven clear?
And do the ships, so big and grand
Go sailing to some other land?

MY LITTLE MAID

Stay in the baby-world so new,
Its flowers are drowning in the dew,
Its paths are soft to tender feet,
Stay in the baby-world, my sweet !

My little maid, my little maid,
You grow too old, I am afraid,
The schoolhouse holds your steady gaze,
Your mind is in a wondrous maze,
So much to learn, so much to see,
You're just as busy as can be,
My nursery rhymes have all been told,
Red Riding-Hood will soon be old.

Stay in the baby-world so new,
Its flowers are drowning in the dew,
Its paths are soft to tender feet,
Stay in the baby-world my sweet !

My little maid, my little maid,
You grow too old, I am afraid,
Your tender face it seems to me,
Is filled full of expectancy.
A spirit questioning, and wise
Looks out at me from your dark eyes,
Till I am fain to hold you fast
And hide you while old Time goes past.

Stay in the baby-world so new,
Its flowers are drowning in the dew,
Its paths are soft to tender feet,
Stay in the baby-world my sweet !

My little maid, my little maid,
You grow too old, I am afraid,
Five years ! it seems a little while
Since you came here with slow sweet smile
On your wee mouth, your pretty chin,
And each cheek with a dimple in,
Your soft hands clutching at the air,
Your birthright all our love and care.

Stay in the baby-world so new,
Its flowers are drowning in the dew,
Its paths are soft to tender feet,
Stay in the baby-world my sweet.



Heather White

SPRIG o' heather, you were born
Where the mountains greet the morn,
Just within the shadow dim
Of the grey rocks harsh and grim,
Just beside the torrent's brim,
You were born ;

I, a naturalist, can trace
In thy sweet sky-lifted face,
Signs and tokens of the place
Clear as morn.

Breath that comes from 'mong the firs,
When the wet-faced sea-wind stirs
In its flight,
Night of gloom, and day of gold,
Hill and vale, white flocks in fold,
Ah, to-night,
Dim my eyes grow as they see
All thy dear heart shows to me,
Blossom from across the sea,
Heather White !

Grannie's Message to Jack

YOU'RE sending Jack a letter, dear—
To-day he's twenty-one,
And plainly I can read your pride
And joy in the dear son.
He wants a message—Ah, if I
Could take his hand in mine
Instead of putting all my love
In one poor little line.

But write out clear and let it read
*To Jack, away from home,
Old Grannie says, get ready,
For the Kingdom come.*

You're smiling daughter as you write,
But Jack won't smile that way,
His mind will just go flying back
To thoughts of yesterday ;
Before he got so big and strong,
And oh, so very nice,
When he was Grannie's white-haired boy
Just dreaming of the skies.

GRANNIE'S MESSAGE TO JACK

So write out clear, and let it read,
To Jack, away from home,
Old Grannie, says get ready
For the Kingdom come.

Somehow the letters that we get
Don't seem to come from him,
And often when I've read them through
My poor old eyes are dim,
He talks too much of worldly things—
My Jack was never proud,
Of wealth and fame, and power to win,
And going with the crowd.

So write out clear, and let it read,
To Jack, away from home,
Old Grannie says, get ready
For the Kingdom come.

You think his birthday calls for more
Than one poor little line,
Nay, there are those who love him less
To make him wishes fine ;
My words go from a faithful heart,
They're true, and they are warm,
There's loving wisdom in them, too,
To keep my boy from home.

GRANNIE'S MESSAGE TO JACK

So write out clear, and let it read,
To Jack, away from home,
Old Grannie says, get ready
For the Kingdom come.

I'd like to see him as he reads,
His blue eyes brimming o'er,
And good thoughts rising white and strong
To be forgot no more ;
Heaven will be nearer to his heart
Than it has been for years,
For he will read in these few words
My love, my hope, my prayers.

So write it clear, and let it read,
To Jack, away from home,
Old Grannie says, get ready
For the Kingdom come.



The Ever and Ever so Long Ago

O, LIFE has its seasons joyous and drear,
Its summer's bloom, and its frost and snow,
But the fairest of all, I tell you, dear,
Was the sweet old spring of the long ago—
The ever and ever so long ago !

When we walked together among the flowers,
When the world with beauty was all aglow,
O, the rain and dew ! O, the shine and showers
Of the sweet old spring of the long ago,
The ever and ever so long ago !

A hunger for all of the past delight
Is stirred by the winds that softly blow,
O, spare but a thought, dear, from heaven to-night
For the sweet old spring of the long ago,
The ever and ever so long ago !



The Height

THE climbing step by step up pathways steep
Had wearied me upon that summer day,
Till, by-and-by, a strong hand seemed to sweep
All save the joyousness of life away,
The heavens stretched their azure folds above—
I stood, my feet upon the dizzy height

I had not thought to reach save in my dreams;
The whirring of an eagle's wings in flight
Towards rarer winds, and still more dazzling gleams
Of the red sun, was every sound abroad.
Full sweet the silence of the solemn place
Where nature, radiant, drew so close to God,
You saw His very kiss upon her face,
And heard the mystic murmur of His love.



Her Portrait

A LITTLE child, she stood that far-off day,
When Love, the master-painter, took the brush
And on the wall of mem'ry dull and grey
Traced tender eyes, wide brow, and changing
blush,
The gladness and the youth, the bending head
All covered over with its curls of gold,
The dimpled arms, the two hands filled with
bread
To feed the little sparrows brown and bold
That flutter to her feet. It hangs there still,
Just as 'twas painted on that far-off day,
Nor faded is the blush upon the cheek,
The sweet lips hold their smiling and can thrill,
And still the eyes—so tender, and so meek—
Light up the walls of mem'ry dull and gray.

God Loveth Us

GOD loveth us ! in pain or bliss,
O heart, be true and strong !
God loveth us, and knowing this
We know life's sweetest song.

God loveth us ! O eyes that find
Life's lesson hard to read,
By tears of loss made dim and blind
Learn His great love instead.

God loveth us ! O hands that grasp
At human tenderness,
And then in emptiness unclasp,
He waits to fill and bless.

God loveth us ! O weary feet
That find life's pathway long,
His love provides a rest so sweet
The hope of it makes strong.

God loveth us ! O hearts that ache
With striving all in vain,
His tender hand is reached to take
The bitterness and pain.

God loveth us ! Fallen one
Creep upward to the light,
God's radiant stars shine on and on,
Until the dawn grows bright.

God loveth us ! in pain or bliss,
O heart be true and strong,
God loveth us ! and knowing this,
We know life's sweetest song.



An Etching

A HARVESTER throws up the sheaves,
And hums a merry old refrain,
Some thistles show their prickly leaves
Among the swaths of yellow grain.

The briar bushes soft and green
Quite hide the zig-gag fence away,
And all the space that lies between
Is carpeted with new-mown hay.

The heat of noonday presses all
To rest and silence, full and deep,
And still the cheery robins call
To show that they are not asleep.

Shadows

“O SWEET white rose, I pray you tell
Why in that fragrant heart of thine
Where golden sunbeams seldom fell,
All grace and gladness seems to dwell,
And summer fragrance hold its shrine ?”

“Sweet, am I,” west wind, sweet and white,
Then leave me in the shadow pray,
Here soft dews bathe me all the night,
And no harsh sunbeam comes at light,
To kiss the great white tears away.”



A Merrie Christmasse Untoe Ye

A MERRIE CHRISTMASSE untoe ye !
The wishe is olde, the sweete refraine
Of that song carolled longe agoe,
When Love crepte downe o’er hille and plaine
Singing, full-toned, to heartes in paine,
“Peace ande goodwill !”
Lete white flowers growe,
A Merrie Christmasse untoe ye !

Marguerite

ALL light and love, and golden grace,
One full glad day, one summer day
Goes ever with me on my way,
And to no other yields a place.

Do you remember Marguerite,
Ah ! faithful one, I need not ask,
Since to forget is such a task,
My strength fails toiling at it, sweet.

We climbed the path among the hills,
And laughed to see the wild-birds go
All startled, flying to and fro
Afraid of great and unknown ills.

The wind laughed with us, and grew warm
With breath of leaf, and stalk, and flower,
No space of that delicious hour
But held a fresh and subtle charm.

Till, by-and-by, we stood and knew
Ourselves upon the height alone,
For *us* the blue sky smiled and shone,
The great world only held us two.

So fair, so cold—it could not be !
Thou wert so proud, my Marguerite,
Thou wert so proud, and O, so sweet
I scarce could look at all on thee.

Till in me grew a madness born
Of the wind blowing from the south,
I bent and kissed thee on the mouth,
The ripe, red mouth—the bow of scorn.

No scorn was on it then, my sweet,
But tenderness beyond compare,
Thy white soul laid its secret bare,
Thy love was mine—*mine*—Marguerite !

I whispered foolish things and fond,
O bliss, for which I vainly yearned !
Not, not for me, the truth I learned,
Thine hand had signed stern duty's bond.

It was the end, we did not say
The lover's lingering good-bye,
Only the day's glad soul did die,
And earth and heaven alike were grey.

Did I forget ? is mine a heart,
One apt to yield up all its store ?
I loved thee ever, more and more
Through all the years we dwelt apart

One walked with me a little space,
To her I gave affection mild,
As to a pretty winning child
Who sought to cheer me with her grace.

With pretty tasks she filled each day,
Walked in my home with gentle pride,
Called me a dreamer, oft would chide
My thoughts for soaring far away.

Her robes swept softly to her feet,
Her hair fell down a golden fleece,
Yet, when mine arm embraced Bernice,
My soul embraced *thee*, Marguerite.

We cannot change, we cannot pass
To other things until we die;
Who knows, the old love may not lie
Within the grave, beneath the grass?

Perhaps 'twas wrong, but this I know
My longing I could never still,
For love was stronger than my will,
And mem'ry would not let thee go.

I know where one long silky braid
Fell down upon thy snowy neck,
And how the blushes came to deck,
And where the cunning dimples laid.

Each of thy little tricks of speech
Hath kept its echo all the while,
Thy laughter growing from a smile
Which sadness oft would chase and reach.

And now we stand alone again,
With naught to keep us far apart;
Come to thy home within my heart,
And there forget all loss and pain.

Come, with that glow upon thy face
We will go back a dozen years,
Back past the graves, back through the tears,
To that cold day of youth and grace.

And there take up the golden store
Of life and love so weighty grown—
I hold thy heart against mine own,
And thus will hold forever more.



The Hoar Frost on the Wood

LOOK through the glistening stubble-fields to
where

Last night, in sullen and complaining mood,
Over the fate that left them grim and bare,

The trees in yonder dear old forest stood.

“The spring,” they moaned, “Ah, it will be a
while

Ere she can reach us with her magic wand !”

Who was it heard ? To-day, mile upon mile,—

There stretches out a white enchanted land,
Each tall tree hath a weight of gems that shine—

Mark how the sun can draw its beauties out—
On every soft white thing its kisses fall,

Till in the air we see a dazzling line
Of sparkling gems—it is a glorious rout
Of nature’s children holding Carnival.

Two Creeds

THE Priest was earnest and sincere—
He deemed that this stout cavalier,
This stranger unto Christ's dear grace,
Who rested with him for a space,
Should hear the truth, what saith the creed?
"To every man that stands in need."

Though weary miles of pilgrimage
Has tried his strength, yet would he wage,
Stout war of argument to-night,
With heathen ignorance of right,
With faltering tongue he then began
To picture to this fellow-man—
In error born, on error nursed,
By pride and passion doubly cursed—
The glories of a city fair,
To which men climb on narrow stair
Of self-denial, prayer and fast,
And zeal unflagging to the last.

"Its gates that flash the sunlight back,
What touch of splendor do they lack?
I see them lift themselves upright—
Of pearl, unblemished, pure and white—

Its streets gleam yellow in the sun,
Through fields of green its waters run,
And o'er it all no shadow flies,
The sun sets not in Paradise.

"From every throat swells forth a song,
Not one is mute of that vast throng,
Who, through the weeping and the night,
Have found their way to Heaven's delight.
No bitterness, no cry of pain,
No grieving over mortal strain,
No shrinking will, no coward fear,
No breaking heart, no scalding tear,
In the fair city built above,
For this is heaven, and heaven is love."

The other bowing courteously,
"Thanks for this kindness done to me.
I doffed my boldness and my pride,
And sat here meekly by your side,
While you, for a brief moment's space,
Painted the beauty of that place,
Where white souls live, now list to me,
And bare your head as reverently,
While I set forth before your eyes
The glories of *my* Paradise.

“A garden hidden quite away,
Where stranger footsteps never stray,
The yellow sun shines all day long,

The wild-bird sings his choicest song ;
There at the gate my angel stands
To welcome me with out-stretched hands;
A lotus-bud gleams in her hair,
Her round, soft arms all white and bare,
Between her lips warm kisses hide,
Love in her eyes that open wide.

A perfume comes up from the beds
Of lilies hanging their white heads,
The pearls of dew begin to fall,
A night-bird to its mate doth call,
The changing shadows softly move
But never touch the face I love;
You know, O Priest, so learned and wise,
The sun sets not in Paradise.

You tell of rest that waits the few,
That strive with earnest zeal and true
To gain it, as the years go past,
By toil, and care, and patient fast,
O Priest ! my heaven gives richer dole,
It takes the laggard, worthless soul,

And fills it up with rapture sweet,
And makes it know itself complete.
Rest ! never penance won such rest
As comes to me when her white breast
Is made a pillow for my cheek,
When her dark eyes look down and speak ;
O Love ! the world and all its care
Lies quite outside this garden fair,
You know, O Priest, so learned and wise
The sun sets not in Paradise.

You look for heaven after death—
I draw it in with every breath—
I am content, be you the same,
If I mistake, be mine the blame,
But in one fair sweet odored grove
Lies heaven, if heaven means peace and love."



HIS EX-PLATONIC FRIEND

I'VE lost a thing of value great,
And, woe is me, I'll now find it
The very choicest thing of all,
Or sure, you know I wouldn't mind it.

Some call it friendship—I don't know.

But take their word as is my duty,
But if the definition's true,
Then friendship is a thing of beauty.

For mine took on so fair a form
It charmed away all care and sadness,
It flashed out beams so strong and warm,
Away went everything but gladness.

It looked from tender eyes of brown,
And spake my greatest fault forgiven,
In wondrous sweetness there it shone—
In truest eyes outside of heaven.

I felt it in the hand I clasped,
So small, and yet so strong to guide me
Through waters deep, or breakers past,
Or aught that threatened to betide me.

With ripe red lips it spake to me,
O voice, that always soothes and blesses !
While I, Philistine, felt to pray
That I might silence it with kisses.

I've lost all this by my mistake,
I walked, you see, not circumspectly,
I pressed a claim for love's sweet sake,
And friendship took to flight directly.

And I am left to think with pain
How folly caused my loss and sorrow,
Had I my friendship back again
I'd do the very same to-morrow.



The Grave

O THE grave is a quiet place, my dear,
So still and so quiet by night and by day,
Reached by no sound either joyous or drear,
But keeping its silence away, away.

O the grave is a restful place, my dear,
Unvext by the weightiest loss or gain,
All the undone work of the speeding year
May beat at its portals in vain, in vain.

O the grave is a tender place, my dear,
The Love immortal, the faith, the trust,
The grace and the beauty, lie buried there,
So pure and so white in a robe of dust.

O the grave is a home-like place, my dear,
Where we all do gather when day is done,
Where the earth mother folds us close and near,
And the latch-string waits for the laggard one.

Settled by Arbitration

THE three sat at meat in a country inn,
And Patrick's face wore an elegant grin,
For the Scotchman lean, and the Englishman
stout

Were having a nice little quarrel out.
Now, it all begun when five times had gone
The glass and bottle to everyone,
The Englishman, he had a stubborn jaw
And could quote whole pages of English law,
While the Scotchman, was as stern and as gray
As the rocks of his country far away.
The bottle it made him but look more stern,
But the other one took a boasting turn,
He talked of their big brave ships on the sea,
Of their soldiers as brave as brave could be,
Of the English beef that no land could beat,
Of their puddings and pastries good to eat ;
And the Scotchman listened to every word
And seemed agreeing with all that he heard,
Till the squared-jawed fellow by-and-by claimed
His country the wittiest ever named ;

“The Henglish wit, sir, hit shines like the sun ”

“Aye ! the sun in a fog,” the other one,

Then the arguments flew so thick and fast—

They’d have come to blows ere the thing was past

Had not Patrick, good hearted, blithe and gay,

Chanced to travel with them that summer day,

“Now sure,” said he, “you know ’tis the fashion

To settle disputes by arbitration,

Faith, a rale ould shindy’s the thing for me,

But the rale ould shindy has ceased to be,

Let’s be the powers, and raison a bit,

Whist now ! and ould Erin will settle it.”

Then these two disputants, they both agreed

To take his finding in word and deed.

“The English wit, sir—let’s take off our hats—

Can’t be seen by folks that are blind as bats,

’Tis none of your common everyday stuff,

Nor like that of Ireland, vulgar and bluff,

Sure, ’tis something I would only compare

To what is well known as precious and rare,

Say to the famous philosopher’s stone—

Or elixir of life to ould sages known;

No Irishman from the hill or the bog

Would say it was like the sun in a fog,

That statement, sirs, on the face is untrue

For sometimes the fog will let the sun through.”

One pacified man went off with good grace,
And Patrick laughed at the other's stern face,
"You think me a blarney—hark, what I say,
I tould the truth in an iligant way,
Sure you know, and I know, and everyone,
The fable of the philosopher's stone,
For stone, elixir, and Englishman's wit
Men have searched long, and found nivr a bit,"
Then low to himself, "faith, that joke's so clear
That even a Scotchman may see it—*next year!*"



The Circuit

A PRETTY port I sailed from,
So long, so long ago,
As day down golden stairway
Climbed to the world below.
Ho, mariner! come tell me,
Come tell me of a truth
Know you a track will lead me back
Unto the shores of youth?

A pretty port I sailed from,
So long, so long ago,
The blue sky stretching over,
Blessed all the world below.
I laughed good-bye so lightly,
Nor recked I then, forsooth,
That leagues of years and mist of tears
Would hide the shores of youth.

Yet ever follows after,
A breath of fragrance rare
From hearts of flowers that blossom
But in its tender air.
And ever hear I, sweet and clear,
The music of its birds—
The whistling flight of wings at night—
The songs too sweet for words.

And ever see its beauty,
The smiling of its shore,
And ever wait, and ever long
To anchor there once more.
Ho mariner ! Ho mariner !
Come tell me of a truth
Know you a track will lead me back
Unto the shores of youth ?

A pretty port I sailed from,
 So long, so long ago,
As day, down golden stairway,
 Passed to the world below.
Sail on ! Sail on ! till light is done,
 Ho mariner, so wise !
'Tis far behind—so far behind—
 This port I sailed from, lies.

Sail on ! Sail on ! you tell me,
 And in the twilight's glow
I'll reach the port I sailed from,
 So long, so long ago.
If this be so, then we may know
 That all who lose will find
Each ship will come to love and home,
 And all it left behind.

Youth's golden shore lies on before,
 So gaily sail we on,
For the port we reach at even
 Is the port we leave at dawn.
The harbor bar shines golden,
 O sweetness of the truth,
We'll cross it o'er, and come once more
 Unto the shores of youth.

Gethsemane

O BLESSED Christ ! O blessed Christ !
The night is deep and long,
And there is none to watch with me
Of all the careless throng.
O blessed Christ ! O blessed Christ !
The world lies fast asleep,
Think Thou on dark Gethsemane
And count the tears I weep.



My Friend

I HAVE a friend, if you should ask
Why 'tis I love her well,
Indeed, 'twould be a weighty task
These reasons all to tell.

First, she is good enough to see—
A pretty face and kind,
That somehow fairer is to me
Than others I can find.

MY FRIEND

She has two lips with laughter filled,
That hold not scorn nor sneer,
She is a little bit self-willed—
Gangs her ain gait, I fear.

She has two strong and supple hands,
Two bright and tender eyes,
She has a heart that understands,
She has a judgment wise.

Her voice—at least to me—is fine,
I like to lie and rest,
And hear her reading, line by line,
The poems I love best.

No jealousy, no trace of spite
Is in her nature strong,
She is so loyal to the right,
So gentle with the wrong.



The Prodigal

THEY sat alone by the fireside, a couple old and
gray,
Brooding over a sorrow keen at the close of a
winter's day.

The woman spake to the man at length, tender-
ly, wistfully,
“The pillar of fire still guides by night, the cloud
still guides by day.

If you would but take the ills of life, the losses,
the sorrow vain,
To the One whose ear is open to hear each cry
of pain !

You are thinking now of Willie, the boy we
loved so well,
And who left his home to wander—whither—Ah,
who can tell !

His room stands just as he left it—I go upstairs
each day
And smooth the pillows with my hands, and for
my darling pray.

He may not have—sometimes my heart grows
fairly sick with dread—

In cold, or storm, or in sickness, a place to lay
his head.

My heart would break did I not know the Father
of us all

Stoops down to make my sorrow less, counts all
the tears that fall.

You will not turn where comfort lies, towards
Him you will not move,

O husband, give the Lord your heart—prove,
prove His faithful love.”

“If I had sought the Lord,” said he, “when
youth and strength were mine,

I might have had to cheer me now as dear a
faith as thine.

But God is just, His laws so stern, I’ve broken
year by year,

God is a judge—I feel that now—just, holy, and
severe.

I scorn to seek Him after all the years I’ve
walked in sin—

’Tis too near to life’s ending now for me to just
begin.

My heart lies heavy in my breast, but I must
bear my load,
My pride has kept me all along a sad and dreary
road.

Yes, I'm thinking, wife, of Willie, the boy who
went away—
Thoughts of him fill the heart of me when comes
this time of day.

I watch you praying for his soul, a light in your
dear e'e,
Methinks a soul from heaven itself might well
come back to see.

But I—I cannot pray at all ; the words they will
not come,
My soul rebels and will not bow—*my boy is far
from home.*

My lad I was so proud of, though often I was
stern,
Wilful was he, but ah, to-night for his presence I
yearn."

There's a step on the walk outside, trembling
hands at the door,
And some one is kneeling by them, sobbing out
o'er and o'er :

“Father, your prodigal has come, unworthy of
your name,

Broken in spirit, buffeted, baptised with bitter
shame.

But say *forgiven*, and lay your hand on me in
the old way;

Pride kept me long from you, but I had to come
home to-day.”

Such a welcome he got from them—the old love
changeth not,

Faithful to death, unswerving—miracles hath it
wrought.

The father turned a glowing face, and whispered :
Let us pray,

My pride has kept me long from God, but I'll go
home to-day.

And then with the firelight shining, leaving his
heavy load,

A prodigal old and hoary came tremblingly back
to God.

He knew the truth, deep as the sea, high as the
heaven above,

Knew that the Fatherhood of God was made
and crowned with Love.

At Quebec

QUEBEC, the grey old city on the hill,
Lies with a golden glory on her head,
Dreaming throughout this hour so fair—so still—
Of other days and all her mighty dead.
The white doves perch upon the cannons grim,
The flowers bloom where once did run a tide
Of crimson, when the moon rose pale and dim
Above the battlefield so grim and wide.
Methinks within her wakes a mighty glow
Of pride, of tenderness—her stirring past—
The strife, the valor, of the long ago
Feels at her heartstrings. Strong, and tall,
and vast,
She lies, touched with the sunsets golden grace,
A wondrous softness on her grey old face.



The Tea Kettle's Tune

I LIKE to hear the kettle sing
At this time of the day,
Such cheery thoughts it seems to bring,
All worries flee away.

THE TEA KETTLES TUNE

*Now spread your table cloth so white,
It tells me as I wait,
Come, bustle 'round, 'tis almost night—
The goodman's at the gate.*

Long time ago it heard John say
Some foolish lover things,
And do you know that to this day
They're in the song it sings.

It caught the gladness in my tone
When baby Grace arrived,
My pride when Jim first stood alone,
My joy when Robbie thrived.

All this was such awhile ago,
You'd think it would forget,
But ah, the tune—I love it so—
It sings me sometimes yet.

When I was vexed with John last night,
And sat here full of pride,
It sang away with all its might,
And shamed me till I cried.

'Tis humming now, *Come, broil the ham
Or supper will be late,
Put on the biscuits and the jam,
You're goodman's at the gate.*

The Creed of Love

I HAVE a creed, I'll tell it you,
Since you have asked me to define
On what I build my hopes of heaven.
My creed—yes, I can call it mine,
Since it belongs to every soul
That reaches upward toward the light,
And trusts in Christ for guidance sure,
And strength and will to do the right.
You'll find it written down, my friend,
In that old Book upon the shelf,
'Tis : *Love the Lord with all thine heart*
And love thy neighbor as thyself.
Not *quite* enough? 'Twas counted so
By One Who walked by Galilee,
His creed of love to God and man
Is quite enough for you and me.

In the Clover Field

THE air is sweet as sweet can be,
The azure sky spreads smoothly over,
And rest and joy keep company,
In this wide field of sun-kissed clover.

Among the heavy heads of pink,
The avaricious bees are straying,
A glad full-throated bobolink,
His highest note is now essaying.

The earth is holding on her breast,
The sweetest flowers of all her growing,
The white clouds float, from out the west
A soft delicious wind is blowing.

Oh, life is good on such a day,
The blue sky bending smoothly over,
For neither care nor cross will stay,
In this wide field of sun-kissed clover.

Lullaby

GOING off to sleep on mamma's breast,
Hush-a-bye, baby boy!
He's the baby mamma loves best—
Hush-a-bye, baby boy!
Rosy cheeks have been kissed by the sun,
Hush-a-bye, baby boy!
He's so tired chasing after fun,
Hush-a-bye, baby boy!

Pretty white "nighty"—isn't he sweet?
Hush-a-bye, baby boy!
Reaching right from his chin to his feet,
Hush-a-bye, baby boy!
Never mind staring up at the sky,
Hush-a-bye, baby boy!
The stars will wink at you by and by,
Hush-a-bye, baby boy!

Fast asleep on his mamma's breast,
Hush-a-bye, baby boy!
Put him down in his little white nest,
Hush-a-bye, baby boy!

A Sunset Talk

HOW sweet the pink flush there in the west,
With the golden bars—let us sit a space—
I want to talk to you as we rest—
Sit where my eyes can dwell on your face.

I have been thinking of you to-day,
You smile as you listen. Is there an hour
I'm not in her thoughts, I hear you say—
Look at that butterfly hid in a flower.

Yes, I have been thinking all day long,
For the fancy came and it will not go,
That if I were to die—I am strong,
'Tis only a fancy of mine, you know.

Only a fancy (you take my breath
With your passionate kisses) people die,
And happiness is no bar to death
Or we never need fear him, you nor I.

Only a fancy, so don't look grave,
We'll be together for years to come,
But, listen, would you be good and brave
If Death, God's reaper, came into our home?

Would you remember the full glad years,
And remembering them forget to weep?
We have been happy, no need for tears
If one of us, dear one, should fall asleep.

Living without me would break your heart,
"O sorrow of joys remembered!" You cry,
Keep all the brightness though far apart,
Explain my meaning—well dear, I will try.

One summer morning I heard a lark
Singing to heaven, a sweet-throated bird,
One winter night I was glad in the dark,
Because of the glorious song I had heard.

"The joy of my life," I've heard you say,
"With her love and laughter, her smiles and tears"—
Let these be the lark's song, sweet and gay,
That will sound in your heart through all the years.

For tell me, dear one, what is love worth
If it cannot crowd in the time 'tis given
To two like us, on this grey old earth,
Such bliss as will last till we reach heaven?

So, if I should die just bend your head,
And kiss my lips as I lie at rest,
Whisper, *I love you living or dead*
Always and ever I love you best.

Why talk of it now? A woman's whim,
We are whimsical creatures, as you know—
Look yonder, the twilight soft and dim
Comes hurrying over the world below.



Truth upon Honor

PA'S brother is a bachelor, but not a crusty one,
He's got the very nicest home and lives there
all alone;

At Christmas-time he buys me up most every-
thing I want,

Because I look, 'so people say, just like my
pretty aunt.

She's just as nice as she can be, and long, long
time ago

Pa's brother was, or tried to be, this same Aunt
Jessie's beau,

For once I heard pa say to ma, "Your sister
was to blame,"

Then ma, she flared right up and said, "She did
right, just the same."

"Your brother, stubborn fellow, he would break a
woman's heart,

I tell you I was glad for one they thought it best
to part !"

I thought of this the other day, when our
relations came

To eat the Xmas turkey, and more things than I
could name.

For Aunt's face got as red as fire when Uncle
Ned came in,
"Peace and goodwill at Xmas time," said pa, with
such a grin.

"I wish," said I to brother Tom, "they'd have a
wedding day,
What is the good of two nice folks sulking
around this way ?

I'd be a bridesmaid for them, Tom, and would-
n't that be fun,
Then we'd go there for holidays as soon as school
was done."
"Don't you believe such stuff of him," said brother
Tom to me,
"Why, everyone that falls in love is silly as can be !

Put all their good clothes on at once—strut
'round an' show off so,
The folks that have to live with them get sick of
it ; 'n know."
Sho ! don't tell up such stuff as that about our
Uncle Ned,

If you don't mind your p's and q's I'll tell him
what you said.

But I found out that I was right—I'll tell you
how it came,

Truth upon Honor, we did play—it's just a
lovely game,

You ask the queerest questions and they answer
out quite free,

And if they tell what isn't true, it's wicked, don't
you see?

Tom asked me was I awful mad (he can be
dreadful mean)

When a great deal prettier hat than mine went
by on Mabel Green?

I had to tell, but never mind, I paid him back
again,

I made him own he copied sums from clever
cousin Ben.

Aunt Jess she laughed, and Uncle Ned said 'twas
a jolly game,

He changed his tune though pretty quick when
round his own turn came.

"Now tell the truth," I said to him—"not maybe
or I guess—

Ain't you just heaps and heaps in love with our
dear Auntie Jess?

At first he scowled at Tom and me as mad as
any hoe,

And Tom he laughed and said, "Own up! you
used to be her beau."

At this he looked and looked at her, and thought
her nice I guess

For right out quick he said, "It's true—I love
your dear Aunt Jess."

We clapped our hands. Now 'tis your turn to
question Auntie here,

But if he didn't—mean old thing—just whisper
in her ear.

Said she, "This is a pretty game, which every-
one should know."

"I wish we'd played it, dear," he said, "a long,
long time ago."

Then I winked hard at brother Tom, and he
winked back at me,

And we sneaked off and left them there as jolly
as could be.

I know a thing that I won't tell—not to Tom
anyway,

I'll be a bridesmaid all so fine before next Xmas
day.

Elspeth's Daughter-in-law

I DON'T know what spell came over us,
That's over father and me,
But two silly things we must have been
To let the boy have his way.
But Sammie was all the boy we had,
An' he grew so big an' tall—
We had no girl, I didn't mind that,
For I don't care for girls at all.

An' that great fellow, six feet I know,
An' an arm I couldn't span,
Was handsome—I may as well own up
That I like a handsome man.
Now father declares the trouble came
To fill our life to the brim
By reason of Sam's good looks—he *thinks*
The boy should look just like him.

Not that I'd hurt his pride for the world,
But I'd feel most awful bad
To see father's features one by one
A-showing up on our lad.
Sam got to college all right enough,

When he came home I declare
He told me about wonderful things
He'd had to learn while up there.
He showed me gloves all padded out,
The cap an' the scanty trews,
An' the mask of wire that hid his face,
The day that they beat the Blues.
I had my doubts about Sammie too,
For fear 'twould spoil the lad,
An' widow Dobbs kept throwing out hints
That he was going to the bad.
She's awful quick with her nods and winks,
An' a body can't forget,
Why, she made me do a thing one day
That I'm mortal shamed of yet.
She'd been telling up a big long yarn
Of boy's deceit, an' of things
That mothers discover unawares—
An' get just desperate stings.
It vexed me so much, that up I went
An' opened our Sammie's trunk,
Though if he had come an' caught me there—
Well, I know I should have sunk.
I searched through all that big pile of stuff,
An' I tried each little key,

But there was nothing in that big trunk
That his mother daren't see.
Then I went over to widow Dobbs,
An' we had a little spat,
My boy was hiding nothing from me,
Thank God! for a boy like that.

But I must tell you about his wife ;
You see we had always planned
That he'd marry Eliza Jane Jones—
She owns a good bit of land.
She isn't good looking, I'll own up,
But in all your mortal life,
You never saw a better
Nor thriftier farmer's wife.

'Twas a shock, I tell you, when he wrote
(Father said I was to blame)
That he'd bring a bride from the city—
Daisy, he said, was her name.
Well, I'll never forget how I felt
When I first saw Sammie's wife,
I shook hands—I couldn't have kissed her
Had it been to save my life.

You see, I'd a thought of the work,
Plenty to do I can tell,

An' I thought when Sammie's wife came home
That I'd try a shirking spell.

An' when I saw her, my heart was full
Of vexation an' surprise,
I thought of hearty Eliza Jane Jones
Till the tears came in my eyes.

She looked like a picture standing there,
A-smoothing her soft hair down,
It made me feel hateful, just to know
I was homely, old, and brown.
It vexed me just to look at her hands,
So dimpled, an' soft, an' white—
I took Mr. Sammie to my room
An' told him it wasn't right.

"She is no worker," I said to him,
"An' drones are bad in a hive,"
He laughed, "Oh we are a sleepy lot,
Daisy will keep us alive!"

"I know how 'twill be," I said to him,
She'll want new things every day
In machinery, to do up the work
In the quick new-fangled way.

"But I won't have it," I said to him,
"I have my way of going,

An' it's girls that can't do anything
That want to do the showing."
He took it good—thinks I to myself
I'll finish while I'm in it,
"There's one thing, Sammie, I've never done,
An' I'm old now to begin it.

I'm old to wait on your lady wife,
An' stick to it day by day,
An' listen to high-falutin' talk,
An' feel I'm just in the way.
An' another thing," I said to him,
Then stopped, an' got red an' hot,
"You needn't think your babies I'll mind,
Because I tell you I'll not."

I wish you could have heard the boy laugh,
He shook the things on the shelf,
"The dear little mammie, shan't be 'bused "
He said, " I'll mind 'em myself."
All this talk I tell just to show
What a fickle thing I am,
An' how little my words really meant
When I said all this to Sam.

It was only some four years ago,
An' stowed in the big back hall

There's machines for almost everything,
Leaning their backs to the wall.
My daughter-in-law 'tends to it all—
A good stout girl at her hand—
If I say it myself, you can't find
Better kept house in the land.

The books, an' papers, an' flowers seem
Part of her every-day life,
An' no doctor can 'tend to a sprain
Better than our Sammie's wife.
Now, I like to sit here in my chair
An' watch her happy an' free,
An' I like—yes, I'll own up—I like
Baby to climb on my knee.

Poor old father is sillier yet,
A slave to three-year-old Jim,
My, he grins an' looks proud as can be
Because the boy looks like him!
Oh, we all have our worries I know,
We find each blemish an' flaw,
But there's one perfect thing in this world—
Sam's wife, *my daughter-in-law*.

Cold Water

MY niece from Boston, Minerva Bleak,
So learned they call her Madam,
With all her 'ologies, French and Greek,
With all the queer things she styles antique,
Came to see me, an' Adam.

My brother, he wrote before she came,
A patient I send to you,
Just chase the cobwebs out of her brain,
And make her happy and sweet again,
Just now, she's horribly blue.

Blue! I cried, 'tis a serious thing,
System all out of kilter!
But Adam laughed when he saw me bring,
Herbs I had gathered late in the spring,
To brew into a philter.

I tell you it was a big surprise
When I got a look at her.
Blue, there was nothing blue but her eyes,
They were as blue as the summer skies,
Adam laughed,—but no matter.

She hadn't been there many weeks

When I began to worry.

A girl should have roses in her cheeks,

Should sing, and laugh sometimes when she speaks,

And not be sad and sorry.

I knew what was wrong, and told her so,

Studyin', and contrivin'

Over things she had no call to know,

An' quite neglectin' the life an' glow

That keep the soul a-thrivin'.

She had books on science, an' books on art,

An' books on things still higher,

Wonderful things that gave you a start,

But not a line, or a word, on the heart

Full of its vain desire.

Well, she'd been there a month—maybe more,

'Twas dreadful stormy weather,

She'd just been telling me o'er and o'er

Quaint little stories she'd told before

As we sat there together.

When Martha came showin' in young Blaine,

(Most as tall as our ceilin',

Such a splendid fellow, good and plain,

With no great beauty to make him vain,

But lots of sense an' feelin'.')

I introduced him all right I know—

I like him—so does Adam,
But Minerva's face went white as snow,
And he said, bowing his head, just so—
“We've met, have we not, madam?”

A nice romance right under my nose,
I watched it growin', growin',
Along through the weeks of frosts and snows
(Oh, I wasn't blind you may suppose)
And bitter north wind blowin'.

For a man from Boston came along,
(Such an elegant fellow)
Played the guitar, wore his hair quite long,
Talked to Minerva of art and song
In tones so soft an' mellow.

Before long I had my feelings stirred,
And vowed he should'nt have her.
I listened long, but I never heard
From his mouth one good sensible word,
Nothin' but rank palaver.

And to watch that girl, who seemed so wise,
Listenin' to all he told her,
It made the tears come into my eyes,
An' my strong temper get on the rise.
But when the man got bolder,

And they talked together, an' agreed
God's word was but a fable,
A good, well-written story, indeed,
Why I got right up, as I had need,
Stand this? I wasn't able.

I told him he had better take
His views where they were needed,
Minerva said 'twas a great mistake,
Said sometimes her heart did fairly ache
To know as much as he did.

Then I got Minerva off alone,
Ah, she was dear, the sinner,
Said I, if old Satan gets this one
It won't be because I haven't done
All that I could to win her.

So I told her things tender and true,
Told her of love undying,
Told her of peace that my own soul knew,
Till pride died out of her eyes of blue
An' she fell softly crying.

"You were a babe when your mother died,
And I stood there beside her,
Can you believe that your mother lied
When she kissed your face?" I said, an' cried
"The Christ will keep an' guide her,"

"Will bring my little one home to me,
As gates of pearl were lifting."

Your mother was very dear to me.

Now on what big mysterious sea

Would you have her soul drifting.

Next day there came through the bitter cold

Two offers, or what I suppose was.

One in an envelope square and bold,

The other all perfume, white and gold,

Tied up in hot-house roses.

They all went skating that afternoon

Down on the frozen river.

When I think how they came back so soon,

Minerva half-drowned, an' in a swoon,

It always makes me shiver.

'Twas all for the best, that bath so cold,

Proved a boon an' a blessin',

Down went Blaine after her, strong an' bold,

While safe to shore the other one rolled.

O 'twas a wholesome lesson !

We sat there a happy crowd that night,

Though winter winds were blowin',

Minerva, a little weak and white,

Her left hand hid in the preacher's right,

Her eyes all soft an' glowin'.

Would you believe it, the other came,
Full of presumes and supposes,
Hoped nobody held he was to blame,
I carried him down, though, just the same,
His bunch of hot-house roses.

He bowed himself off with such an air,
Not a bit overpowered,
And Adam said anything was fair,
With a man who went around with such hair,
And proved himself a coward.

My brother wrote to me yesterday,
"How *did* you cure my daughter,
She's not the same girl that went away."
But when I ask her, she'll laugh and say,
"The cure! O just cold water!"



Long Time Ago

THERE'S been a fair in our nearest town,
A wonderful show of new things,
And Ebenezer and I went down
Just to see the folks, and view things.

I wore the bonnet I got last week,
This stylish city-made bonnet,
And was sorry I did after all,
For the dust settled so upon it.

I wouldn't have Ebenezer know,
Or Parson, for all creation,
But I don't feel right unless I'm dressed
In the very latest fashion.

There's sister Thomson, a good old maid,
It's many a hint she's given,
I'd feel more at home in Vanity Fair
Than I would in the courts of heaven.

She vexes me with her saintly ways,
I never need try to please her,
And I can guess at the reason too,
She wanted my Ebenezer.

"She's delicate," she said to him once
When he was at first my lover,
"No sort for a farmer lad to choose,
Sakes alive ! there's nothing of her."

"She won't stand life's toil and turmoil long !"
She says of late, so regretful,
Well, she may get Ebenezer yet
For all men are so forgetful.

But never mind, I went to the fair,
I wish, my dear, you had been there,
For I know you would never forget
Such pretty sights as were seen there.

Now, since I saw the marvel myself,
I know you'll surely believe it,
They're fooling 'round with the lightning grim,
Have made a plan to deceive it.

Just think of taking some bits of steel,
And a rod that's far from pliant,
To put on the roof of a house or barn,
That it can glare 'round defiant.

Ebenezer fancied it, I know,
And wanted to make the bargain,
But kind of dreaded what I would say,
And also good elder Largain.

“’Twould be right pleasant ” he said to me,
“When the storm was at its labors,
To have something standing up like that
To scare it off to the neighbors.”

“Ebenezer,” I said, very sharp,
For I didn’t like his spirit,
“God holds all the lightning in His hand,
Then why should His children fear it ?

“You just let that precious thing alone,
Let it alone, Ebenezer,
And if we’re struck when the lightning comes,
Why never mind, Ebenezer.”

Then there were machines for everything,
But I would feel like a ninny,
Setting all day on a cushioned chair,
Spinning rolls on that queer jinny.

They wanted to sell me one right off,
I shook my head, “not at present,”
I’ll do my work in the good old way,
Though it isn’t quite so pleasant.

I’ve done my share of the big farm’s work,
Spinning, and weaving, and baking ;
Though sometimes only the good Lord knows
How my back and legs are aching.

And whatever sister Thomson says,
She can't make fun of my working,
And if I like fashion most too well,
'Tisn't the fashion of shirking.

There's awful smart people in the world,
You'd think so if you had been there,
Such signs and wonders on every hand,
At the fair was to be seen, dear.

And I wore my very newest things,
Maybe I shouldn't have done it,
But truth is truth, and I'll own right up,
I look quite nice in this bonnet.

I wouldn't have Ebenezer know,
Or parson, for all creation,
But I don't feel right unless I'm dressed
In the very latest fashion.



The Meanest Man

“TELL you why I never got married?

I'd as lief as not, Sarah Ann,
I never but once got an offer,
And then—well, he wasn't the man.

Tell the story—yes, if you wish it,
You cannot remember I know
When the widow Wemp an' her youngster
Moved in the old cottage below.

That spring was as backward as could be,
The nights and the days were so cold,
Not a bird had a bit of a song
But the robins, saucy and bold.

Did you ever try to be kind to
A kitten that scarcely could stand?
Half starved, or half drowned, or half frozen,
Yet it flies from your outstretched hand?

Well, 'twas just so with that little one
When I tried to get him one day,
My heart kind of melted watching him
At his solemn unchildish play.

A bran new idea, but struck me
As I washed the dishes that night,
I sauntered down to the cottage
With a basket, not very light.

Oh, but that was a comfortless room !
The widow so thin and white
Was rocking the boy, and a dimness
Came over my eyes at the sight.

I walked right up to her and kissed her,
Says I, little woman I know
Things haven't gone well with you lately,
Or you wouldn't look as you do.

But, says I, if a friend can help you,
And ease up your trouble a mite,
Why, I'll just sit down here beside you,
An' we'll talk it over to-night.

She took my two hands and she held them,
The big tears ran down her pale cheek,
"Oh, I'm lonely, she cried, and foolish,"
Says I, you are worn out an' weak.

What has this to do with my offer?

Be patient, my dear Sarah Ann,
If you'd listened a minute longer
You'd have caught a glimpse of the man.

For right there all creaking and groaning,
Beneath some rough limbs meant for wood,
In front of the door of the cottage
Old Abner Green's big waggon stood.

An' Abner came in without knocking,
A-nodding to her, an' to me,
"What, two of us here! well there's nothin'
Like havin' good neighbors," said he.

"Now, I've heard you're mazin' poor, Missus,
An' I reckon it must be true,
Speak out to us fully and freely,
It maybe I can help you through."

She told him—I sat there and listened
To a story of hopes and fears,
Of poverty, sorrow, and heartbreak,
Till I scarce could see for the tears.

She talked of the home of her childhood,
Of parents and friends kind and true,
Of seasons o'erflowing with pleasure,
Of skies that were cloudless and blue,

Of the meadows so fragrant with clover,
With bees in each down-drooping head,
Of the noisy stream rushing onward,
Away to its pebble-lined bed.

Of the homely affection abounding,
The work that was duty's sweet call,
Of the church that stood on the hillside,
Of the graves—the end of it all.

"I'm waiting," her voice broke a little,
"For one perfect summer to come,
Not the stifling summers of cities,
But one of the summers of home.

And before the frost touches the flowers"—
Here she held the boy to her breast—
"I'll be sleeping too soundly to care,
And this dear one—ah, God knows best!"

Now I'm not soft-hearted as some folks,
But an odd catch came in my breath,
She seemed such a lone little creature,
With nothing to wait for but death.

But Abner, he rose up and buttoned
His great coat, and smiled so benign,
"Missus," he said, "I've brought you some wood,
There's no kinder heart—hem ! than mine."

Them limbs may be just a little tough,
But no fire is tougher, I guess,
Don't thank me, I know what you mean now,
An' feelin's are hard to express.

Perhaps I've a penny about me
To give to that boy that's asleep,
Don't let him be foolish at spendin',
But teach him to hold and to keep.

There's likely some things at the house, too,
I can either send up, or bring,
Don't thank me, you're poor but you're honest,
You can work it out in the spring.

I'm not so well-grounded as some folks,
An' I took a tumble from grace,
To talk of her working to pay him,
An' death in her pretty young face.

He followed me out as I started—
My head pretty high—down the lane,
But just as I came to the thorn-hedge,
He caught up, and said he, “ Now Jane,
I've something special to tell you,
You needn't go hurrying through;
Say, I'm thinkin' of marryin', Jane,
An' the lucky woman is—*you.*”

Yes, I might have found one much younger
If I had gone lookin' around,
But you can keep house, little woman,
With the best of them, I'll be bound.

Looks shan't count when I hunt a woman,
Said I to myself, long ago,
That she's savin', an' strong, an' hearty,
Is all that I hanker to know.

I tell you what, Jane, such a bargain
Won't travel your road every day,
I've fixed my affections right on you,
When shall it be? What do you say?

We're both of us steady an' honest,
We've both got a fair share of pelf,
I've looked quite a while for a woman
Who thinks just about like myself."

I gasped, Sarah Ann, for a minute,
Was never so shamed in my life,
And old Abner Green stood there leering,
Quite certain, that I'd be his wife.

"Do I look so anxious to marry?"
Said I, with lips scornfully curled,
"That you really think I'd go partners
With the meanest man in the world?"

So you've waited to find you a wife,
With a mind like your own, you say,
But you'll not find one so mean as that,
If you wait till the Judgment Day."

Then I turned me about and left him
Staring up at the silent stars,
But I fancied I caught some swear words
As I hurried over the bars.

Sarah Ann, that's all the offer
This Aunt Jane of yours ever had ;
'Tis as well, I'm content to live here
With my own little bright-eyed lad.

Yes, his mother died in the springtime—
Here he comes with his hair all curled
And face like a peach—now isn't he
The loveliest thing in the world !



